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# THE LONDON QUARTERLY & HOLBORN REVIEW

*Edited by J. Alan Kay, M.A., Ph.D.*

APRIL 1958

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THE STATE OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES TODAY

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## Editorial Comments

### THE STATE OF NEW TESTAMENT STUDIES TODAY: INTRODUCTION

I AM HONOURED by being invited by the Editor to write the introductory article of this series. The fact that all seven contributors are known to me personally is an added pleasure. Three of them, Dr C. L. Mitton, Dr C. K. Barrett, and Mr Owen E. Evans, were colleagues of mine at different times at Wesley College, Headingley, Leeds, where they served with distinction as Assistant Tutors. Professor J. K. S. Reid is Head of the Department of Theology at Leeds University and for a decade has numbered Headingley men among his students. Professor F. F. Bruce, now Head of the Department of Biblical History and Literature in the University of Sheffield, was at an earlier stage a Lecturer in Classics at Leeds University. Professor C. F. D. Moule, Lady Margaret's Professor of Divinity in the University of Cambridge, and Professor G. W. H. Lampe, Fellow of St John's College, Oxford, and now Head of the Department of Theology in the University of Birmingham, are Anglican scholars whom I have met from time to time at the annual meetings of the New Testament Society, known as *Studiorum Novi Testamenti Societas*. The fact that I know these writers well is all the more interesting to me since Dr J. Alan Kay had chosen his team before I was invited to introduce it to the readers of the LONDON QUARTERLY AND HOLBORN REVIEW.

All seven contributors are either young or in the prime of life. This is exactly as it should be in a series which deals with the contemporary aspects of New Testament studies. They write upon subjects brought to their notice every day in current publications, and the questions of students who look for a standing-ground in the whirl of the exciting and difficult problems of a new period. It would have been a mistake to invite older scholars to write these articles, for of necessity these look at current questions from the point of view of a more leisured age. Indeed, and intelligibly enough, there is a tendency in some quarters to regard source critics as the devotees of outmoded conceptions, as white-coated workers who handled literary test-tubes and delicate balances like scientific toilers in allied methods of research. This, of course, is not just. The scholars of the pre-Streeter era were more like scavengers who delve in the dust of basements and perhaps sometimes forgot to come upstairs into the sunlight of day. Most of them belonged to the right wing of the Liberal School and were spared from its worst errors by a healthy interest in New Testament theology. I must refer later to some of the studies which concerned them most, for we cannot understand the interests of today without recalling those of an earlier time.

The present contributors have already won their spurs. Dr Mitton is the author of *The Epistle to the Ephesians*, *The Formation of the Pauline Corpus of Letters*, and a commentary on St Mark's Gospel. Dr Barrett is well known for his commentaries on St John and on Romans, and other learned works including *The Holy Spirit and the Gospel Tradition* and *The New Testament Background*.

Mr Evans is writing valuable articles for *The Expository Times* and *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*. Professor Reid is one of the Editors of *The Scottish Journal of Theology* and has recently written *The Authority of Scripture*. Professor Bruce is the author of two commentaries on the Acts, one on the Greek text and the other on the English version, as well as of several other works and collections of public lectures. Professor Moule is the General Editor of the new Cambridge Greek Testament Commentary, and has written the commentary on Colossians and Philemon and *An Idiom Book of New Testament Greek*, and Professor Lampe is the author of *The Seal of the Spirit* and the Maurice Lectures for 1955, *Reconciliation in Christ*. We are to sit at the feet of men who are the heirs of a long tradition and who are fully alive to the problems of today.

Subjects of present-day interests are included in the series, Form Criticism and Philological Studies, Biblical Theology, Eschatology, Demythologizing, Allegorical Interpretation including Typology, Textual Criticism, and the Johannine Writings. Some of these themes are not new, but they are included because of modern developments subsequent to 1930.

Form Criticism, introduced to us in Germany by Dibelius and Bultmann in 1919-21, did not become a living interest in Great Britain until after the date mentioned in the last paragraph. Elsewhere I have described it as the child of disappointment, but it was also the child of promise, since beyond the investigation of literary sources it sought to plunge into the hinterland of oral tradition. As Professor Moule will show, it is of value because it isolated narrative forms and shapes which the Gospel tradition assumed in the course of oral transmission, in preaching and debates in the primitive Christian communities. It boldly entered no-man's-land when it tried to estimate the extent to which the theology of the communities influenced, and even created, the tradition, thus raising in an acute manner the question of the historical value of the Gospel narratives and sayings. This historical interest will be seen from several articles in the series to be one of the burning questions of the day. It is an issue less serious for those whose constant preoccupation is the doctrine of the Church, but of vital significance for all who see in Scripture the ultimate basis and authority of Christian truth. The issue, however, is not simply a case of 'Either-Or'. From the beginning Christian theology has left its mark on the New Testament, which in turn has instructed, tested, and judged the Church. How can these competing claims be combined? Christian men of today who are not Fundamentalists cannot, and ought not, to evade this question, and we are indebted to Professor Moule for his guidance.

It was fortunate that at the time Form Criticism was being examined in this country there came a deeper interest in Biblical Theology stimulated largely as a result of the impact of Karl Barth's *Romans* upon New Testament scholars. We see it emerging in Sir Edwin C. Hoskyns' *Riddle of the New Testament* (1931) and C. H. Dodd's *Apostolic Preaching and its Developments* (1936). Professor Reid will treat this subject. He rightly begins with A. B. Davidson's *Theology of the Old Testament* (1904), for which there is at present no fully adequate substitute, although important contributions have been made in Oesterley and Robinson's *Hebrew Religion, Its Origin and Development*, and by Professor A. R. Johnson in considerable articles published by the University of Wales,

including 'The One and the Many in the Israelitish Conception of God', 'The Vitality of the Individual in the Thought of Ancient Israel', and 'Sacral Kingship in Ancient Israel'.<sup>1</sup> A marked characteristic of present-day study is the degree to which Old and New Testament ideas have been seen to form an indissoluble unity, and the perception of their religious importance. In the hands of its best exponents this study of biblical theology avoids the danger of obscurantism on the one hand, and of failing to observe different emphases in the witness of Scripture. It is grounded in a growing appreciation of the living authority, with which we are confronted, and its place in experience and preaching.

Eschatology, the next subject to be treated, has taken a central position in biblical studies, since early in the present century it sprang into prominence through the works of Johannes Weiss and Albert Schweitzer. Whatever judgement we may pass upon Schweitzer's *Quest of the Historical Jesus*, it has compelled scholars to revise their understanding of the Kingdom of God as a slowly evolving order of society and of this conception as the essence of the teaching of Jesus. Eschatology, in concentrating upon 'the Last Things' and their bearing upon New Testament teaching, raises vital issues which the modern student cannot escape. What was the attitude of Jesus to His Parousia or Coming? To what extent was the Jewish hope of the consummation of all things fulfilled in the fact of Christ, so that eschatology was 'realized', and in what respect is it still the object of Christian expectation? It is not surprising that different views should be taken by New Testament scholars, especially as regards the question of the 'Second Coming'. The religious aspect of this teaching is enhanced by the uncertainties of world politics and the impact of the discoveries of modern science upon the future of man. What is the goal to which the whole creation moves? Professor Bruce will introduce us to this fascinating theme. He will discuss and record the different opinions of scholars today and submit for our consideration his own well-balanced views.

It will be seen by now that a much more practical significance belongs to the Series than any to be found in the more academic essays of a generation ago. Current New Testament studies concern human beings in the conditions of their existence in the world today. This is especially the case in the article of Mr Owen Evans under the forbidding title of 'Demythologizing'. As Mr Evans will explain, this term has been coined by Rudolf Bultmann in an essay on 'The New Testament and Mythology', which was written during the Second World War and is now available in a collection of essays, *Kerygma and Myth*, edited by H. W. Bartsch (1954). It has been ably discussed by Professor Ian Henderson in his *Myth in the New Testament*. As these titles suggest it raises the question how far the mythological element in the New Testament, in the Gospels, the Epistles, and the Christian Message itself, is to be interpreted by modern men. Obviously, much depends on how we define a 'myth', on whether it is sufficient to describe it as a story in terms of daily life which describes, or purports to describe, supernatural events. A real problem is at stake, for there are narratives in the Gospels which read strangely in the light of the assumptions of modern science. The problem, moreover, concerns more than ancient stories; it affects the content and meaning of the message which the first Christian preachers proclaimed. In subjects such as this it is essential to ask the right questions, and it will be found that Mr Evans does this when he asks how far Christianity

can dispense with 'myths', whether the gospel can be expressed in terms of what the philosophers are calling 'existentialism', and whether indeed the results of this process can be recognized as 'the Gospel'. I must not anticipate here his discussion, but content myself with pointing out its vital importance.

An allied question has to do with the existence of allegory or allegorical elements in the New Testament, and along with this the justification for appealing to Old Testament 'types' in expounding the New. A generation ago it seemed certain that the question of allegory in the Gospel stories was a dead issue. It was felt to belong to an uncritical age which had not yet learned to insist upon the need for a literal and historical interpretation of what the New Testament writers actually say. The parables, it was taught, were to be read in the light of the historical situation in which Jesus found Himself and fanciful ideas read into them were to be avoided. It was useless to find a spiritual meaning in the details of the furniture of the Old Testament Tabernacle or in strange stories about the patriarchs. Some among us may need to be persuaded to reopen these questions, but we cannot ignore the fact that this very thing is being done. Professor Lampe will show us that certain scholars are taking second thoughts on these matters. Warning us against the perils of purely arbitrary interpretations, he points to instances in the New Testament where a resort to allegory is actually made, as in the reference to the story of Hagar in Galatians 4<sub>21-7</sub>, and discusses the question how far the preacher of today may draw spiritual lessons from stories of the past. Many scholars have been repelled by the view that the Evangelists were influenced by typological parallels and others have greeted it with the utmost enthusiasm. Have the numbers in the narrative of Feeding of the Five Thousand, 5,000, 5, and 2, any significance? Was St Luke influenced by the wanderings described in the Book of Deuteronomy when he told in Luke 9<sub>51-21</sub><sup>38</sup> how Jesus journeyed to Jerusalem? Such suggestions seem fanciful, but since the issue has been raised and warmly received by some, we cannot simply brush them aside. Professor Lampe's article will help us to make up our minds. These questions are bound up with that religious and liturgical use of the Old Testament which was a marked feature of Primitive Christianity and they demand attention in an age in which there is a healthy desire to hear what the Bible has to say to us. This interest, of course, must be distinguished from the avidity with which the first Christians collected proof-texts from Old Testament prophecies and Psalms which foreshadowed all they had discovered in Christ, in His birth, life, death, and Resurrection, an interest which C. H. Dodd has so well described in his lectures *According to the Scriptures* (1952).

The remaining two articles in the series deal with problems more closely linked with earlier investigations. Textual criticism, or the study of the early Greek manuscripts and of versions in Latin, Syriac, and Coptic, and other tongues, has long been an outstanding British interest. The Revised Version of the Bible, and indeed all modern English translations, are deeply indebted to the monumental labours of a long line of scholars which culminated in the Greek text of Westcott and Hort. Scribal corruption began at an early date and continued long until the invention of printing in the fifteenth century, and it has been the constant preoccupation of generations of scholars to remove errors and work back to a purer and more original text. These researches have extended

not only to the New Testament text, but also to that of the Septuagint, or the Greek translation of the Old Testament in the centuries immediately preceding the Christian era; and these are especially important because the Septuagint was the Bible of St Paul and of the New Testament writers in general. Much study also has been given to the original text of the Latin Vulgate which goes back to the end of the fourth century A.D. The packed pages of Professor Bruce M. Metzger's *Annotated Bibliography of the Textual Criticism of the New Testament, 1914-1939* (1955) seem formidable to the casual reader, but they are significant because there are no other writings, sacred or profane, to which a tithe of the attention recorded has been given and based on such wealth of textual evidence.

The reason for including in the present series an article on this subject is that in the last thirty years several important manuscripts have been acquired, some indeed quite recently. I well remember in 1931 announcing to my own students the discovery of the Chester-Beatty papyri which have increased our knowledge of the text of the Gospels, the Acts, the Pauline Epistles, and the Apocalypse. Later followed the Fragments of an Unknown Gospel, and later still a few pieces of papyrus which experts assign to the first half of the second century A.D. Since then other discoveries have been made, including Papyrus Bodmer II, which contains a great part of the Gospel of St John. This last discovery bears not only on the text, but also on the date of the Gospel which must be much earlier than radical critics had supposed. These questions are discussed in Dr Barrett's article in which important conclusions are summarized concerning the text of the New Testament. If problems still remain, this fact is a reminder that the Scriptures were not verbally inspired, otherwise we should not have been left in uncertainty of the exact text of the original writings.

The last article in the series, by Dr Mitton, links present-day studies with those of an earlier time, for perhaps no subject has been discussed so much and with such different conclusions as the date, authorship, and historical character of the Gospel of St John. The most important of these questions is the last. How far can we use this Gospel, which differs so greatly from the first three, in describing the life and ministry of Jesus, and how far do the sayings ascribed to Him in it reproduce, or represent, what He taught and said? It is to this question in particular that inquiry and reflection are still being given. From past research we know more than ever before about the religious background and literary structure of this Gospel, but it is not with these matters so much as with the absolutely vital question of its historical character, that modern scholars are concerned. Real progress has been made. We are not content to explain the Johannine sayings as free creations on the part of the Evangelist, nor again as bare transcripts of what was actually said. An element of interpretation is undoubted. The position appears to be that the sayings are utterances interpreted by the Evangelist's experience of fellowship with Christ in the Christian community to which he belonged, informed and directed by the Spirit, who, he believed, guides believers into all the truth. But, obviously, this broad conclusion needs to be elucidated by a fuller study of the religious beliefs of primitive Christianity in general and of the psychology of the Christ-testimonies in particular. We shall not expect Dr Mitton to solve questions which still remain open, but we shall be grateful for the report which he is able to give of the situation as it exists today.



As we consider the present position of New Testament studies today the question arises whether it is healthy for something like 'fashions' to arise and follow one another. Is there something in research which corresponds to desires for changes in dress and in diet in everyday life? Is the shift of interest due to a certain exhaustion in effort and a cry for something new? Are we like the Athenians described by St Luke as men 'who spent their time in nothing else, but either to tell or hear of some new thing'? I do not think this criticism is fully justified. No more than any parallel inquiry can New Testament study be furthered without taking into account the mood and the interests of a particular time. Otherwise, as St Paul said of speaking with tongues, we shall be speaking into the air. The interest of today centres in things that concern life and the form in which they express themselves. We are all 'existentialists' in the sense that we value Christianity to the degree that it concerns us in the situation in which we find ourselves. This may explain the impatience which is manifest with purely academic studies. It explains also the vogue of 'fashions'. We are anxious to be relevant to our time as well as faithful to the New Testament.

It is a reasonable prophecy that sooner or later we shall be compelled to take up again questions which for the time being have been left in abeyance. The indebtedness of the writers in the present Series to the past is manifest and is recognized by them. If to older eyes they break new ways, that is as it should be, but perhaps after being airmen they will want to be scavengers again, as to a considerable extent they are. For when all is said about demythologizing, existentialism, typology, allegorism, and the rest, the old problems remain and will not let us go. And many of them have been left only partially solved. We have not yet done with the sayings-source known as Q, with the earlier stages of the Passion narratives as they were used by the first Christian communities, with the independence of the Lukan Passion story which is far from being a re-editing of St Mark's narrative, with sources, early groupings of traditions, and even with dislocations in the Gospel of St John. Professor Moule combines his study of Form Criticism with philological research and Professor Bruce links Eschatology with the critical problems of the discourse in Mark 13. This is as it must be. The importance of New Testament study today is that it has driven us back to the first Christian conventicles, to primitive celebrations of the Lord's Supper, to the problems, hopes, and anticipations of the first Christians, the absorbing diligence with which the first teachers and Evangelists read the Old Testament, and the rapture with which Christ was confessed as 'Lord' in the first assemblies. In short, it is interested in life rather than in documents. All this and much more is an indispensable preparation for that greatest of tasks—that of bringing home the New Testament and its message to the present generation with its frustrations, hopes, and fears and to present it as the one solvent of man's problems, the foundation of his aspirations, and the satisfaction of his deepest needs.

VINCENT TAYLOR

<sup>1</sup> Cf. also C. R. North, *The Old Testament Interpretation of History*; N. H. Snaith, *The Distinctive Ideas of the Old Testament*; W. D. Davies, *Paul and Rabbinic Judaism*.

## FORM CRITICISM AND PHILOLOGICAL STUDIES

MANY THEOLOGICAL students in this country woke up rather suddenly late in the day, to find standing over them a reproachful figure called (misleadingly) Form Criticism. Unless they read German, they mostly began to make its acquaintance through reading B. S. Easton,<sup>1</sup> Vincent Taylor,<sup>2</sup> R. H. Lightfoot,<sup>3</sup> or a translation of M. Dibelius<sup>4</sup> in the 'twenties or 'thirties. Until then, they would mostly have thought that the foundations of their critical reading of the Gospels were duly laid as soon as they had read their Burkitt and Streeter (for themselves or by proxy) and could recite the reasons for believing in the priority of Mark and the existence of Q, M, and L and were able, perhaps, to discuss Proto-Luke. All these symbols or terms stood for theories about written sources behind the existing Gospels, and upon written sources their critical attention was almost exclusively focused. The result, at least for the less thoughtful and more credulous, was inevitably an unexamined—indeed, almost unconscious—assumption that the Evangelists were rather like modern compilers, sitting at desks covered with their predecessors' work, and piecing together bits of documents. In short, a conception of the Gospels as written documents dominated the scene.

But outside this country thought had long been moving in a rather different direction. The new impetus seems to have come at first from work on folklore, especially in the Old Testament, by scholars in Scandinavia and Germany, who claimed attention for the investigation of the laws of oral transmission. What actually happens, they asked, to stories when they are passed from mouth to mouth in an unliterary community? Gradually, at least two important principles formulated themselves in reply. First, that, by examining a sufficiently wide range of examples, one might become familiar enough with the standard 'shapes' or 'forms' assumed by stories in successive stages of transmission to be able, with some degree of accuracy, to strip the latest form of a given story down, by a kind of onion-peeling process, to its most primitive, original shape. And secondly, that it is a mistake to treat the sort of written documents which are now under discussion as though they were 'literary', since the collective influence of communities was generally more important than any one individual in shaping a story, and even in moulding a whole document. Attention came thus to be focused on living communities, with fluid traditions assuming a protean series of forms, rather than on a thin stream of documentary transmission.

From this conclusion—still pursuing for a moment its application to Old Testament research—it was easy to develop the modern Scandinavian tendency to question sharply the Graf-Wellhausen type of documentary theory of the origin of the foldings and faults in that complex massif, the Pentateuch, and to look instead to a more or less tenacious memory, often of groups rather than individuals, and to the subtle blending and fusion of living streams of oral tradition.<sup>5</sup>

But meanwhile it had quickly become apparent to Continental scholars that the same technique was of front-rank importance also for New Testament



studies, especially in the Gospels. Are not the Gospels composed largely of distinct units or sections ('pericopae' as they are called), mostly comprising brief stories or anecdotes? And are not these eminently amenable to the same treatment as had begun to be applied to the Old Testament? In fact, by comparing and contrasting parallel units in the synoptic Gospels, one might sometimes actually catch a story in transit, so to speak, and mark the stages of growth or modification as it passed from mouth to mouth and was told to different audiences.<sup>6</sup> Thus (to take one stock example) it came to be widely held that the interpretation of the parable of the sower reflected the adaptation, by Christian preachers and teachers, of a story originally told by Jesus in a different setting and for a different purpose. Jesus Himself meant that, despite all wastage and hindrance, the kingdom of God was already showing a good yield; it was the early Church which turned the story into an allegory of different sorts of response to the Gospel, and which perhaps successively modified the hard saying about the *mystery* of the kingdom of God (that is, the presence of Jesus and the meaning of his mission) until it came to speak of the *mysterries* (plural), i.e. the secret allegorical interpretation of the parables so as to apply to a contemporary situation. The present writer has serious doubts about this particular example, but he quotes it because it is well known.

In order to put the study on something like a scientific basis, one obvious preliminary was to classify the different types of unit according to their shapes. Stories whose chief point was a miracle tended to take one shape—namely, sick man, failure of others to cure him, success of Jesus, astonishment of on-lookers. Stories leading up to an epigram or pithy saying as their climax took another shape: opponents come to try to trip up the Master, he gives a clever reply, they go away baffled, the common people are delighted. Gradually, this preliminary classification gave to the devotees of this research the German name of *Die formgeschichtliche Schule*, the school of thought concerned with the history of 'forms', which somehow came to be represented by the slipshod and inexact English term 'form criticism'.

But it must be confessed that even the German term is not particularly apt, because the classification of 'forms' often breaks down and, at best, is of secondary importance. What is significant is the variation in the context of a given section in different Gospels, since this may well betray a change of audience or a fresh application. Prominent, therefore, in the technique was the attention given to the *context* of a pericope or unit in a given form—not its literary context in the Gospel where we read it, but the context in which it may have been uttered at a given stage. Just as Scandinavian studies of the psalms had paid close attention to their setting in communal worship, so the setting of these New Testament sections—whether in worship, in debate, or in instruction—became important. Some scholar<sup>7</sup> seems to have coined the not very good German term *Sitz im Leben*, setting-in-the-life, to denote this context, and *Sitz im Leben* has become a constant cliché. In the example alluded to just now, the original *Sitz im Leben Jesu* (setting in the life of Jesus) of the story of the sower will have been a situation in which Jesus wanted to emphasize the impressive yield of the kingdom of God despite all hindrances; but one *Sitz im Leben der alten Kirche* (setting in the life of the early Church) might be a time of persecution, when the shallowly rooted were apostatizing, and when the

worldly were smothered in the weeds and thorns of money-making; and another might be the stage when esoteric teaching, perhaps in allegorical form, was reserved for the few who were 'within'. More and more it became the fashion to assume that, in order to explain a section of the Gospel, some given setting in the community must be postulated. On this showing, the story of the coin in the fish's mouth reflected the controversy about whether Jewish Christians need continue to pay the Temple tax; the reverberations of the legalistic controversies and the Gentile mission were to be heard in the sayings about Jesus fulfilling the Law or (as the case might be) superseding it; and so forth. The claim, in short, was that the Gospels were the deposit of Christian community life—a sociological phenomenon, rather than the work of individuals preserving the words and deeds of an individual.

From this it was but a step to the conclusion that the needs and the debates of the Christian communities had actually created much of the Gospel material, virtually *ex nihilo*, that they cared little for preserving historical traditions as such, and least of all for details of merely biographical or private interest, and that the factors in shaping the Gospels were the demands of Christian evangelism, teaching, worship, and apologetic. 'In the beginning was the sermon'<sup>8</sup>; and the sermon—*kerygma*, 'proclamation'—is certainly not biography.

British scholarship, having eventually awoken to what was going on, received it with, for the most part, characteristic caution, though R. H. Lightfoot<sup>9</sup> and J. M. Creed<sup>10</sup> gave the method a warmer welcome than many, and Bishop Rawlinson's commentary on Mark was distinctly influenced by it.<sup>11</sup> The conservatives reacted vigorously against it, regarding it as destructive and dangerous. Dr Vincent Taylor<sup>12</sup> in England and Dr B. S. Easton<sup>13</sup> in America are good representatives of a balanced and careful attitude, in their sympathetic understanding, but also trenchant criticisms of some of the less well-founded conclusions of form criticism.

What has chiefly come from this—to cut a long and complicated story down to a short and grossly over-simplified form—is the wide recognition in this country of the fact that oral transmission and the interests and circumstances of the Christian communities did play a very important part in shaping the Gospel material. At the same time, however, there is a widespread refusal to conclude from this that there is none of it which owes its survival simply to its being true and historical, or that everything has been distorted out of its original shape into a shape dictated by the interests and beliefs of the later Church. It is, to venture a probably rash analogy, as though the discovery of the fluid flywheel had at first thrown doubt on the existence of any direct, rigid transmission at all, until someone had the sanity to take up the floor-boards and have a look. From many quarters has come, in particular, the reminder that, after all, the interests reflected in at least the Synoptic Gospels are definitely distinguishable from those reflected in, say, the Pauline epistles. If the Synoptic Gospels were really only the expression of *Gemeindetheologie*—the theological interests of the community—how is it that they contain so little about the Holy Spirit and so much about the Son of Man (to take only two instances of marked changes in emphasis)?<sup>14</sup>

Among controversial points in the discussion at the present moment in England are the two following. First, Dr C. H. Dodd's study of the framework

of Mark<sup>15</sup> has been called in question,<sup>16</sup> and a burning issue is whether or not a real chronological sequence can be found in the Gospels at all: was 'Caesarea Philippi' really a watershed? And secondly, there is the question whether the Evangelists are to be regarded after all as themselves creative artists, carefully selecting and arranging their material and deliberately 'saying something'; or whether they are mere compilers of traditions, or mere repositories of community lore. Some scholars today would not accept the implications of Dibelius' words:<sup>17</sup> 'The company of unlettered people which expected the end of the world any day had neither the capacity nor the inclination for the production of books, and we must not predicate a true literary activity in the Christian Church of the first two or three decades. . . .' They would distinguish creative artistry from literary activity and would be ready to recognize the former even in a period of breathless expectation and in a community which was a stranger to anything like literary elaboration. In short, attention is returning in some measure to the Evangelists, as themselves individually contributing to the arrangement and shape of their Gospels.<sup>18</sup>

But what are the instruments employed in the dissecting rooms (if one may use the analogy without disrespect) of the form critics? They are essentially the same as were, and still are, used by the literary critics: linguistic instruments. The meaning, origin, use and distribution of the words in a particular writer's vocabulary are still looked to for a clue to his sources, whether written or oral. Thus, critics who impugn the originality of the allegorization of the parable of the sower (to revert once more to our stock example) observe that 'its vocabulary includes . . . seven words which are not proper to the Synoptic record';<sup>19</sup> and if these words can be shown to belong to subjects current in the primitive Church but not in the Judaism of the Lord's ministry, obviously an important clue may have been found. Again, there are parts of the Gospels which, although written in Greek, show such a high proportion of idioms and syntax which are more at home in a Semitic language, that the presumption is either that the writer is deliberately copying Semitic style (as a modern religious writer might attempt a 'King James' passage) or that he is using a source which was originally in a Semitic language. In any case, changes of style, vocabulary, and ideas may be a clue to the fact that we are dealing with a composite piece, even when the origin and nature of its components may still escape us.

But if the instruments are essentially the same as criticism has always used, the last thirty years or so have sharpened and improved them considerably. At the turn of the century, the great flood of secular papyri from Egypt enabled such scholars as Deissmann, J. H. Moulton, and G. Milligan to show how close the New Testament was to real life, and to remove a large number of words from the list of the exclusively biblical, and a considerable number also from the catalogue of the exclusively Semitic. But it is generally recognized that their case tended to be pressed rather too far, and that the Greek bible in fact still retains a considerable distinctiveness of language and idiom.

Simultaneously, our understanding of the actual meaning of biblical words has been increased by the study of the papyri, the inscriptions, and other sources. Foremost in honour in this field must be named the veteran scholar Walter Bauer, whose monumental *Wörterbuch* is now reaching its fifth edition, the fourth<sup>20</sup> having been translated and further edited by the late Dr W. F.

Arndt and Dr F. W. Gingrich.<sup>21</sup> Bauer's introduction to his fourth edition, published separately, is happily incorporated in Arndt and Gingrich, and supplies a wealth of information about the state of these studies at the beginning of the present decade.

Much attention is also being devoted to the comparative study of New Testament language and idiom as between different parts of the New Testament itself. By careful comparison of the idioms of the Pauline epistles—to take one instance—conclusions have gradually been reached as to the articulation and emphases of his sentences.<sup>22</sup> More data are, at the same time, thus available for the solving of problems of authorship, although it must be confessed that even after such magisterial studies as those of Dr Mitton<sup>23</sup> and Dr Percy<sup>24</sup>, on opposite sides, the problem of Ephesians still remains, in the eyes of some, unsolved.

New Testament textual research has gone forward with overwhelming intensity—witness the successive editions by Erwin Nestle, the impending British and Foreign Bible Society edition, and the great critical edition begun under the late S. C. E. Legg and now continued on an international scale with America playing a leading part; not to mention innumerable monographs and articles. Scientific aids, such as ultra-violet inspection, have increased the accuracy of our detection in faintly written MSS. The techniques of textual criticism are becoming more varied, and there are various schools of thought; while the sheer quantity of the MSS available makes the editing of Classical texts seem almost child's play beside the size and complexity of the New Testament apparatus. Incidentally, the more exactly textual research establishes the original readings, the greater will be the precision with which a given author's style may be examined; though it must be remembered that we still do not know much about the extent to which—say—St Paul's epistles were dictated verbatim, freely spoken and freely reproduced in the amanuensis's own style, or actually written by the apostle himself.<sup>25</sup>

Finally, a major factor in linking together the theological and linguistic aspects of New Testament studies has been the truly magnificent *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*, initiated in 1933 by the late Dr Gerhard Kittel and continued under the direction of Dr Gerhard Friedrich. At the time of writing, instalments have reached Vol. VI, fascicle 9 (roughly the 5,580th page!), bringing us to *πορεύομαι*. It is only a pity that so comparatively little of this vast thesaurus has been made available so far in English.<sup>26</sup>

All in all, students of the New Testament today are very considerably better equipped linguistically and textually than their predecessors, and their eyes have been opened as never before to the importance of the traditions, the life, and the worship of the communities in which the writings took shape. (A good popular presentation of this viewpoint is in H. G. G. Herklots's *A Fresh Approach to the New Testament* (S.C.M., 1950).) What is needed now is a great deal of level-headedness and sanctified commonsense. The critic who neither adheres blindly to outmoded conceptions of literary transmission, nor falls over backwards in his efforts to be fair to scepticism about the historical value of any of the traditions, will find himself possessed of sufficient data for constructive advance in the understanding of the New Testament.

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- <sup>1</sup> *The Gospel before the Gospels* (Allen & Unwin, about 1928).
- <sup>2</sup> *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition* (Macmillan, 1933).
- <sup>3</sup> *History and Interpretation in the Gospels* (Bampton Lectures, Hodder & Stoughton, 1935).
- <sup>4</sup> M. Dibelius, *Die Formgeschichte des Evangeliums* (Tübingen, 1919), tr. as *From Tradition to Gospel* (Nicholson & Watson, 1934). For misleading features of this version, see J. M. Robinson, *The Problem of History in Mark* (S.C.M., 1957), p.13n.
- <sup>5</sup> See *The Old Testament and Modern Study*, ed. H. H. Rowley (Oxford, 1951), pp.xxvii. ff, 48ff.
- <sup>6</sup> See C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (London, 1935); J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (English tr., S.C.M., 1954).
- <sup>7</sup> R. Bultmann, *Die Geschichte der synoptischen Tradition*<sup>2</sup> (Göttingen, 1931), p.6, attributes it to Gunkel.
- <sup>8</sup> E. Fascher, quoted by V. Taylor, *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, p.12.
- <sup>9</sup> *History and Interpretation in the Gospels*, the Bampton Lectures already alluded to.
- <sup>10</sup> E.g. in his commentary on Luke (Macmillan, 1930).
- <sup>11</sup> In the Westminster Commentary (Methuen, 1925).
- <sup>12</sup> *The Formation of the Gospel Tradition*, already alluded to.
- <sup>13</sup> *The Gospel before the Gospels*, already alluded to.
- <sup>14</sup> Professor H. Riesenfeld of Uppsala (in a recent address at Oxford, *The Gospel Tradition and its Beginnings*, Mowbray, 1957) is prepared to believe that much of the tradition about the words and deeds of Jesus was actually committed to memory during his ministry.
- <sup>15</sup> 'The Framework of the Gospel Narrative' in *E.T.*, xliii.9 (June 1932), reprinted in *New Testament Studies* (Manchester University Press, 1952).
- <sup>16</sup> See, e.g., D. E. Nineham in *Studies in the Gospels* (ed. D. E. Nineham, Blackwell, 1955).
- <sup>17</sup> *From Tradition to Gospel*, p.9.
- <sup>18</sup> Dr. A. Farrer carries this to what some may think are fanciful extremes (see his *A Study in St Mark*, Dacre Press, 1951, and *St Matthew and St Mark*, Dacre Press, 1954).
- <sup>19</sup> C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom*<sup>3</sup> (London, 1942), pp.13f.
- <sup>20</sup> *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der übrigen urchristlichen Literatur* (Töpelmann, 1952).
- <sup>21</sup> *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge and Chicago, 1957).
- <sup>22</sup> E.g. P. Schubert, 'The Form and Function of the Pauline Thanksgivings' (*Z.N.T.W.*, Beiheft 20, 1939).
- <sup>23</sup> C. L. Mitton, *The Epistle to the Ephesians* (Oxford, 1951).
- <sup>24</sup> E. Percy, *Die Probleme der Kolosser- und Epheserbriefe* (Lund, 1946).
- <sup>25</sup> See O. Roller, *Das Formular der paulinischen Briefe* (Stuttgart, 1933); J. A. Eschlinan in *Revue Biblique* liii (April 1946), pp.185ff; and for criticisms, E. Percy, *op. cit.*, p.10n.
- <sup>26</sup> At least the following articles are, however, available: translated by the late J. R. Coates (A. & C. Black), 'Love', 'The Church', 'Sin', 'Righteousness', 'Gnosis', 'Apostleship'; and by various translators (S.C.M.) 'The Servant' of God' (Black), 'Basileia' and 'Lord.'



## BIBLICAL THEOLOGY

IN 1904, A. B. Davidson<sup>1</sup> wrote: 'We speak of a Natural Theology, a Biblical, and a Systematic Theology. . . . In Natural Theology nature is the source of our knowledge. In Systematic Theology, while Scripture supplies the knowledge, some mental scheme, logical or philosophical, is made the mould into which the knowledge is run, so that it comes out bearing the form of this mould. In Biblical Theology the Bible is the source of the knowledge, and also supplies the form in which the knowledge is presented.' These are the opening words of a great book; but read today they testify perhaps more eloquently to age than to greatness. Yet the book from which they are taken is little more than fifty years old. Within half a century, the first of the three conceptions introduced so confidently to the reader has come under heavy critical fire, and most theologians would be happier to replace the term by another drawing the lines of distinction differently. The second concept has both lost and found a meaning. As for the third, many would today wish to assimilate 'systematic theology' to, and some even equate it with, the second member of the triad. The key for understanding these surprising and rapid theological manœuvres is the varying value given to biblical theology.

'Biblical theology' can today denote at least two distinguishable things. It can mean the theology to be found in the Bible itself—either the theology of the Bible as a whole, or the biblical contribution to a particular theological theme. On the other hand, the term is frequently used to denote a particular type of modern theology which avows the Scriptures as its basis, declares that it takes the Bible with the utmost seriousness, and claims, with varying degrees of strictness, to be itself derived from the Scriptures. The uses are of course not exclusive.

This article will not try to establish the fact of the existence of these two tendencies to which the name 'biblical theology' is given; their existence can be taken for granted. But, if historical origins are to be considered, the one dates from as early as 1904, when Albert Schweitzer discovered the presence in the Gospels of the element of eschatology cavalierly disregarded by the contemporary theology, allowed the Bible to have its say regardless of the theological mood of the day (though his interpretation has not vindicated itself), and wrote *Von Reimarus zu Wrede*;<sup>2</sup> the other from 1918, when Barth's *Römerbrief* appeared, astounding the contemporary theological world with its message and the author himself with the interest it aroused.<sup>3</sup> The intention here is to assess the stage to which biblical theology has come.

(i) *The Background of Biblical Theology.* To anyone surveying the last fifty years of theology, the existence of a biblical theology must seem surprising. Only towards the end of this period has it become even conceivable. 'The maxim that the Bible must be studied "like any other book" has been applied, . . . the investigations to which it has given rise are in full swing'—so in 1893 wrote W. Sanday.<sup>4</sup> The era of biblical criticism had fully dawned; an enterprise remarkable and fruitful was well under way. The acids of criticism were applied to the Scriptures. The Bible<sup>5</sup> was dissolved into a 'library of books'; the books themselves were analysed into their component parts, and their sources were laid bare. The kaleidoscope was vigorously shaken, and the fragmentary nature

of its contents was disclosed. It was exciting, illuminating, and instructive. But with attention so preoccupied, it was difficult to bear in mind at the same time the unity of the Bible which was the presupposition of an earlier uncritical age. Indeed it seemed no longer possible to conceive it. There was, perhaps, the 'theology' of J, E, D, or P; but for the Old Testament as a whole, only *The Religious Ideas of the Old Testament*.<sup>6</sup> *The Theology of the Gospels*, and *The Theology of the Epistles*<sup>7</sup> were taken each in turn, and there was many a capable *Introduction to the Literature of the New Testament*,<sup>8</sup> but no theology of New Testament as a whole.

Today a remarkable change has come over the scene. 'Nowadays attention is directed not so much to the sources as to the contents of the New Testament', says a publisher's notice;<sup>9</sup> and with equal right the same thing could be said of the Old Testament. It would be wrong to suppose that all that is happening here is the swing of a pendulum, that, being at last satiated with criticism, attention has simply veered back again to take account of the forgotten unity of the Bible, and that the *status quo ante* is being re-established. There has been no radical recession from the principles of criticism or from its more or less established conclusions. On the contrary, the new position has been reached by way of biblical criticism itself, and especially by way of the literary and linguistic studies which accompanied it. The study of biblical words, of biblical literary *genres* and so on, has led to appreciation of their theological significance. A decisive point was reached with the publication of Kittel's *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament*.<sup>10</sup> It marks an end and a beginning—an end or at least a decisive stage for the pursuit of linguistic meaning which must henceforth be theologically conceived; and a beginning of progress in expressing the theology of the Bible, so that E. Stauffer can say<sup>11</sup> that it is possible to write in a few hundred pages a New Testament theology which would have otherwise taken a thousand, 'because the reader can now consult Kittel's *Wörterbuch* and its preliminary lexicographical work can be presupposed'. Critical and linguistic progress has advanced up to and over the boundary where it finds the theologian at work, and in theology alone can it complete itself.

(ii) *The Content of Biblical Theology*. A. B. Davidson affirms<sup>12</sup> the genetic character of Old Testament theology: 'This means not only that Old Testament theology shows us the religion of the Old Testament *in genesi*, that is, in the condition of actually arising or originating, but that its progress was, so to speak, organic.' Similarly, in the case of the New Testament, the history of primitive Christianity can be represented as 'an epigenetical process, a sort of progressive theological development'. Thus 'the history of the Christian religion had a most promising beginning as a new piety. But then it took a fatal turn and became the story of a theology, and finally it came to an unhappy end as the history of dogma'.<sup>13</sup> In other words, the analytic method of criticism made alliance with the studies of *Religionsgeschichte* both of Christianity and of other religions. From this standpoint, the theology of the Bible amounts to no more than a number of 'religious ideas' and their development. Stauffer firmly rejects this conception: 'the so-called history of religion in primitive Christianity is a history of theology from its beginning, from the self-interpretation of Jesus', and primitive Christianity is not epigenetic but 'preformatory'.<sup>14</sup> The development, whose existence must in some sense be recognized, has not the character



of 'advance into novelty' (this is the typical Roman Catholic understanding of development of dogma). The situation is rather that there are theological problems and a sustained contemporary attempt to state and solve them, precisely because the biblical data contain these very problems. It is not a matter of the 'simple message' of the New Testament (or the Old Testament) becoming overlaid with theological accretion and complication. Theological complexity is a datum, not an accident. It is already involved when Yahweh confronts Abraham with the command, 'Get thee out of thy country',<sup>15</sup> or when God associates with Himself and His action a Son of Man.<sup>16</sup> Understanding of the content of biblical theology is thereby altered and even transformed. The Bible can of course be read to yield information about the religion of Israel, but to supply it is not the biblical intention. It follows that to read the Bible as if it were meant to do so is bound to lead to wrong conclusions. The theology of the Bible consists in its *witnessing* to God acting in *history* (see §§ iv and v, below).

(iii) At this point, the two meanings connoted by the term 'biblical theology' become distinct from one another, and two lines must accordingly be followed up. One of them will investigate whether any conclusions, however tentative and provisional, are emerging from the application of this newer understanding of biblical theology to the study of the Old Testament and of the New Testament (see §§ iv and v, below). But it must first be asked how it comes about that 'biblical theology' should denote also a certain type of modern theology.

The easy separation which A. B. Davidson made between biblical theology and systematic theology cannot now be maintained. The two have approached one another, and share common theological problems. If so, modern theology cannot be content simply to replace the biblical form with another derived from quite other sources; and again if so, biblical theology is likely to exercise a much tighter control over modern theology in the interests of truth. The most vigorous protest against the idea that transient secular categories should determine the content or even the form of theological statements comes, of course, from Barth.<sup>17</sup> But Barth is careful to qualify his statements about theology's independence of other influences by the recognition that such influences are bound to be present and must have some effect; and sometimes he seems to say no more than that theology's best defence against being misled by this fact is awareness that what we say cannot avoid being influenced by modern categories.<sup>18</sup> Milder expressions of the same thing occur elsewhere: 'It is, indeed, strange that the practice of enunciating a broad and general definition of a "sacrament" and from it "reading off" a Christian doctrine of the sacraments should for so long have passed virtually unchallenged.'<sup>19</sup>

How then is it positively to be explained that biblical theology refers both to the theology of the Bible and also to a modern theological trend? The clue is to be found in the fact that criticism itself broke through the theological barrier and found itself both providing the data of the new theological understanding of the Bible and recognizing its own limitations. As early as 1931, Sir Edwin Hoskyns saw the direction in which things were moving and wrote:<sup>20</sup>

If the general reader requires from the critic assured results concerning date, authorship, and historicity, set forth in tabulated form, he must be disappointed. The progress of critical investigation of the New Testament cannot be compared to a

gradual mounting the steps of a ladder. One generation does not achieve a number of results which pass into the text-books, so that the next generation is enabled to mount a few steps higher on the ladder. Rather, as each advance is made, the problem as a whole begins to look different; and the 'assured results' of the previous generation require constant reconsideration when seen in a new perspective.<sup>21</sup>

In these words, Hoskyns expresses the new humility pervading criticism, and at the same time, with rare insight, draws attention to a remarkable assimilation of the methods of criticism and of theology. The differences radically separating scientific method and theological (and for that matter philosophical) method may no longer be held to distinguish the methods of criticism and theology. In consequence, the two disciplines themselves draw nearer to one another. A. B. Davidson's distinction has been eroded away; so that E. Stauffer can speak in a single breath of 'the primitive and canonical form of Christian thinking and of all "systematic" theology'.<sup>22</sup> All biblical theology in some degree belongs to the age in which it is written; no modern theology (not even Roman theology!) would wish to be called non-biblical, though variations exist in the strictness with which this principle is applied.

(iv) The other line leads to the special consideration of the New Testament. But a statement about 'the state of New Testament studies today' cannot today avoid referring to *Old Testament* studies. Here the reference must be reduced to a single lapidary sentence. It is today being emphasized that the theology of the Old Testament is characterized by a concern for *history*,<sup>23</sup> with the general object of *witnessing* to God,<sup>24</sup> particularly illustrated in the *cultic elements* that have recently been detected.<sup>25</sup>

(v) *The New Testament*. There is no longer any danger that (a) the *complexity* of the New Testament will be minimized. At this point too the age in which criticism was doing its work singlehanded, as it were, is over. Here again Hoskyns wrote perceptively:<sup>26</sup> 'There is a riddle in the New Testament. And it is a riddle neither of literary criticism, nor of date and authorship, nor of the historicity of this or that episode. The riddle is a theological riddle.' Hoskyns goes on to define it: 'What was the relation between Jesus of Nazareth and the Primitive Christian Church?' Critical investigation itself led to the problem; the story of New Testament biblical theology could be told as a series of attempts to solve it; and the attempts are quite different from the simple process of stratification of the New Testament in which the earlier period of study found the clue to its understanding. Following up this diagnosis into more recent time, R. H. Lightfoot finds it necessary to select Mark, and in a series of essays to give reasons for thinking that this Gospel, above all others frequently regarded as primarily simple narrative, is in fact 'profoundly mysterious and baffling'.<sup>27</sup>

(b) Further, the *unity of the Bible* is being notably emphasized. One aspect of this is that the Old Testament and the New Testament are being used to throw light on each other in a way which was impossible so long as the omniscience of critical canons went unchallenged. H. H. Rowley devotes a book<sup>28</sup> to this theme, finding a 'correspondence' between Old and New Testaments unique in kind. E. Stauffer<sup>29</sup> in the first pages of his *Theology* says simply: 'The first thing that is bound to strike us on opening a Greek New Testament is the immense number of Old Testament quotations.' A. G.

Hebert<sup>30</sup> prefers to employ the concept of 'pattern' in which recognition of divine salvific deeds in the past is coupled with a recurrent expectation of even more decisive salvific deeds in the future. This renewed interest in the relation of Old and New Testaments has given rise to a variant of great importance: L. S. Thornton and Austin Farrer have supplied studies in a new typology, in which the 'fundamental unities exhibited in the Bible' consists of indispensable 'living images'.<sup>31</sup>

(c) From this point onwards, the roads again divide. Some modern theologians press farther the critical methods, and under Bultmann's guidance map out a demythologizing programme. Others regard criticism as having led to the frontier of theological study, which now, acknowledging its debt to criticism, ought to take over the advance. About this latter trend a word must be said here. Not only has unity between the Old and New Testaments been widely affirmed; a close identity seems also to be increasingly recognized between the different parts of the New Testament. This can be made plain as follows: It was typical of liberalism to ask concerning the 'essence of Christianity', and Harnack's answer in terms of 'the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man' is famous. The answers given had this in common, that, the essence being discovered, the rest could be dealt with as secondary accretion. The present stage in biblical theology possesses the character it does because C. H. Dodd formulated the same kind of question in a quite different way when he drew the distinction between *kerygma* and *didache*.<sup>32</sup> The consequences of this distinction might have been once again to dismantle the New Testament into primary and secondary elements. In fact, they were quite different, and a kerygmatic element is now discerned by an impressive number of scholars as running through the whole of the New Testament. Thus (to quote two works only) A. M. Hunter:<sup>33</sup> 'The pattern of the kerygma runs through the New Testament, giving to it amid all its diversity, a deep essential unity.' Similarly, E. Stauffer:<sup>34</sup> 'The so-called history of religion in primitive Christianity is a history of theology from its beginning, from the self-interpretation of Jesus.' 'To be a theologian accordingly means to proclaim the glory of Christ in the name of God, and to develop the proclamation in the realm of thought.' This element is a New Testament parallel to the witnessing function which recent biblical theology tends to ascribe to the Old Testament, thus supplying a further bond of unity between the two Testaments.

(vi) The design of the present article excludes prediction of the ways in which biblical theology may be expected to develop from now on. This is just as well, for certainly the writer does not claim prophetic insight. What may justly be asked for, however, before the article concludes, is a brief note assessing the strength of the position reached. It has not been easy to generalize, as this article has attempted to do, about the extraordinarily vigorous and diverse enterprises being carried on under the name of biblical theology; and indeed the attempt made here may have proved very indifferently successful. On the assumption that some of what has been said is true and expresses some of the truth, one may venture to affirm that certain values have been asserted or re-asserted which will not soon or lightly be discarded. That the Bible may not be dealt with 'like any other book', that it displays a remarkable unity (though of course not a uniformity) of aim and even of structure, that it is 'profoundly

mysterious', and that the core of the mystery is 'a theological riddle'—these aspects will continue to engage the attention of theologians. On the other hand, this position is clearly vulnerable on two sides. It could issue in a new obscurantism, and it could come to conceal the differences (not unconnected with development and whatever truth is contained in the idea of 'progressive revelation') which undoubtedly exist. But these are only dangers; and on the whole they do not at present appear likely to materialize as defects. Both the vigour and the diversity of the studies being undertaken seem to preclude any obscurantist relapse and also any too light-hearted disregard of the heterogeneity of the biblical witness.

J. K. S. REID

<sup>1</sup> *The Theology of the Old Testament*, p.3.

<sup>2</sup> Translated, 1910, *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*.

<sup>3</sup> See *Kirchliche Dogmatik*, I/1, First Edn., p.ix.

<sup>4</sup> *Inspiration*, p.1.

<sup>5</sup> βιβλία=books—as probably every Sunday-school class is still being carefully told!

<sup>6</sup> By H. Wheeler Robinson, 1913.

<sup>7</sup> Respectively by James Moffatt (1912) and H. A. A. Kennedy (1919).

<sup>8</sup> Pre-eminently James Moffatt (1911); cf. the parallel volume to the literature of the Old Testament by S. R. Driver (1891).

<sup>9</sup> Hugh Montefiore, writing of A. M. Hunter's recent *Introducing New Testament Theology*.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. the less ambitious *A Theological Word Book of the Bible*, ed. A. Richardson (1950), and *Vocabulaire Biblique*, ed. J. J. von Allmen (1954).

<sup>11</sup> *New Testament Theology*, p.7.

<sup>12</sup> *The Theology of the Old Testament*, p.8.

<sup>13</sup> E. Stauffer, op. cit., p.254.

<sup>14</sup> Op. cit., p.255.

<sup>15</sup> Genesis 121.

<sup>16</sup> See especially E. Stauffer, op. cit., p.255.

<sup>17</sup> 'The most vigorous'—but what is said here must be compared with what immediately follows, and supplemented by saying that many 'Barthians' are much more radical than he.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Church Dogmatics*, I/1, p.231. But it is unfair to charge Barth summarily with surrender to a Kantian phenomenalist epistemology, as does D. D. Williams, *Interpreting Theology*, 1918-1952, p.48.

<sup>19</sup> Neville Clark, *An Approach to the Theology of the Sacraments*, p.71. The book is No. 17 in a series entitled 'Studies in Biblical Theology'. Titles of both book and series are significant enough in the context of this article.

<sup>20</sup> With Noel Davey, *The Riddle of the New Testament*, p.13.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. the series appearing in *The Expository Times* entitled 'Important Hypotheses Reconsidered', and beginning in October 1955 with 'The Proto-Luke Hypothesis', by Vincent Taylor.

<sup>22</sup> Op. cit., p.174. For what this form common to both Christian thinking and systematic theology is, see, below, § v.

<sup>23</sup> Cf. G. E. Wright, *The Biblical Doctrine of Man in Society*, p.10 (No. 2 in a series whose name is significantly 'Ecumenical Bible Studies'): 'the primary area of unity' of the Bible lies in its historical testimony to . . . God's activity'; E. Jacob, *Théologie de l'Ancient Testament*, advance notice in *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie religieuses*, 1957, No. 2, pp.204f: 'présence d'une histoire et non d'une idée'; G. von Rad, *Theologie des Alten Testaments*, p.8: not 'historische Darstellung', but 'Stoffe in den heilsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhängen'.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. the same writers: G. E. Wright, op. cit., p.9: 'the Bible's testimony to what God has done'; E. Jacob, op. cit.: the 'déroulement même de l'histoire d'Israël' inspires the threefold plan of the work, 'la personne de Dieu, l'action de Dieu, contestation et triomphe final de l'action de Dieu'; G. von Rad, op. cit., p.8: 'jenes immer neue Ergreifen und Bekennen der Gottestaten'; p.114: 'die historische forschung sucht ein kritisch gesichertes Minimum; das kerygmatische Bild tendiert nach einem theologische Maximum; and *Studies in Deuteronomy*, especially ch.7, 'The Deuteronomistic Theology of History in the Books of Kings'.

<sup>25</sup> Especially associated, for example, with the names of Gunkel, Mowinckle, and A. R. Johnson.

<sup>26</sup> Op. cit., p.14.

<sup>27</sup> *The Gospel Message of St Mark*, p.3.

<sup>28</sup> *The Unity of the Bible*.

<sup>29</sup> Op. cit., p.17.

<sup>30</sup> See *The Authority of the Old Testament and Fundamentalism and the Church of God*.

<sup>31</sup> See respectively *Christ and the Church* (Part 3 of *The Form of Servant*), and *The Glass of Vision*.

<sup>32</sup> E.g. *History and the Gospel*.

<sup>33</sup> *Introducing New Testament Theology*, p.67.

<sup>34</sup> Op. cit., p.255 and note 585.

## ESCHATOLOGY

IN ADDITION to the normal progress of biblical study, one or two events of recent years have directed special attention to the eschatological teaching of the New Testament. Two events in particular may be mentioned, the one occurring in the practical life of the Church, the other of a more purely academic nature. These are the World Assembly of Churches at Evanston, Ill., in the summer of 1954, and the discovery and study of the Dead Sea Scrolls from Qumran. The Evanston Assembly was the occasion of a number of careful studies of the Christian hope; the Qumran texts have introduced us to an aspect of eschatological expectation in Israel at the beginning of the Christian era which invites both comparison and contrast with what we find in the New Testament.

The literature which has appeared of late on New Testament eschatology is bewildering in its variety, and the ordinary Christian may well ask what he is to believe. 'What do we ask for when we pray: "Thy kingdom come"? What do we mean when we say in the Creed: "... from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead"? And what are we to understand when we are told at the Holy Communion that "as often as we eat this bread, and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death till he come"?'

We cannot leave the Old Testament out of sight when we review recent literature on this subject; for the eschatological teaching of the New Testament is rooted in that of the Old. We must think, for example, of Sigmund Mowinckel's great book, *He That Cometh*, now accessible to English readers in the excellent translation by G. W. Anderson (Blackwell, 1956). Mowinckel holds that at the annual New Year festival in Jerusalem the kingship of Yahweh was celebrated and the promises made by Yahweh to the house of David were recalled, but the contrast between the ideal embodied in these promises and the actual fortunes of the royal house became so painfully evident as time went on that the ideal was projected into the future and associated with the figure of that coming prince of the house of David who came to be known as the Messiah *sans phrase*, with whose advent the expected Day of Yahweh would be inaugurated. Mowinckel has certainly identified one factor in the eschatology of the Old Testament, though not the only factor.

Mention should also be made of the Fernley-Hartley Lecture for 1952, S. B. Frost's *Old Testament Apocalyptic* (Epworth Press, 1952), which investigates the origin and development of the most distinctive literary form in which the eschatological hope expressed itself. Here it is insisted that apocalyptic is not the eschatologizing of mythology (in which case it would have little to say to us) but the mythologizing of eschatology, the casting of the eschatological hope into forms drawn from mythology. In the latter case, the process of demythologizing could leave us with something of real substance and value.

Apocalyptic is so foreign a mode of expression to most of us today that it is difficult to realize that the apocalyptists were, for the most part, saying in their way what other biblical writers said in other ways. For example, no two books are more diverse in literary form than the Johannine Gospel and Apocalypse; but when we get behind the form to the substance, we discover that both works are concerned to present One whose name is called 'The Word of God' saying to His followers: 'In the world you have tribulation; but



be of good cheer, I have overcome the world' (John 16<sub>33</sub>; cf. Rev. 5<sub>5</sub>, 19<sub>13</sub>).

The perfect tense 'I have overcome' suggests the change in eschatological outlook that takes place when we pass from the Old Testament to the New. In the Old Testament, eschatology is forward-looking; its dominant notes are those of hope and promise. While these notes are not absent from the New Testament, the dominant note is that of fulfilment: in the ministry of Jesus the long-expected 'kingdom of God' is present, and through His death, Resurrection, and Exaltation it comes with power. But if that is so, is there anything further to be looked for?

What is the *eschaton*, the 'last thing', which is the object of eschatological hope? If it came with the ministry and triumph of Jesus, then it cannot be the absolute end of time, for time has gone on since then. Perhaps we should say that the New Testament reveals the 'last thing' to be really the 'Last One', the *Eschatos* (cf. 'the First and the Last' as a title of Jesus in Rev. 1<sub>17</sub>, 2<sub>8</sub>, 22<sub>13</sub>). That is to say, Jesus Himself is the fulfilment of his people's hope, and the 'Amen' to all the promises of God.

As Albert Schweitzer, with his 'consistent eschatology', was the most significant name in eschatology a generation ago, so in our day C. H. Dodd, with his 'realized eschatology', is probably the most significant name. In his *Parables of the Kingdom* (1935), he interprets the parables of Jesus in terms of the challenge to decision with which men are confronted by the presence of the kingdom in His ministry. In *The Apostolic Preaching and Its Developments* (1936), 'the kingdom of God is conceived as coming in the events of the life, death, and Resurrection of Jesus, and to proclaim these facts, in their proper setting, is to preach the Gospel of the Kingdom of God' (pp.46f.)—without reference to another coming in the future. These events constitute an eschatological process, 'a decisive manifestation of the mighty acts of God for the salvation of man'; and the relapse into Jewish eschatology which led to a concentration on an *eschaton* yet to come had the effect of relegating to a secondary place just those elements of the gospel which are most distinctive of Christianity. In a later work, however, *The Coming of Christ* (1951), Dr Dodd appears to allow a future consummation associated with the person of Christ: what came to earth with the advent of Christ 'was final and decisive for the whole meaning and purpose of human existence, and we shall meet it again when history has been wound up. . . . At the last frontier-post we shall encounter God in Christ . . .' (p.58).

Parallel to Dr Dodd's interpretation is that given by Joachim Jeremias in *The Parables of Jesus* (Eng. tr., 1954); indeed, he acknowledges his indebtedness to Dr Dodd. The parables, according to Dr Jeremias, express an eschatology 'that is in process of realization'; they proclaim that 'the hour of fulfilment is come' and compel the hearers to come to a decision about the person and mission of Jesus (p.159).

The work of T. F. Glasson stands in the Dodd succession. In *The Second Advent* (1945) he argued that towards the middle of the first century various circumstances induced a spirit of great excitement and expectancy in the early Church which led to the belief that a culminating intervention from heaven must soon take place; this was to take the form of a manifestation of Christ in glory, the details of which were filled in from Old Testament descriptions of theophanies and of the Day of Yahweh. In *His Appearing and His Kingdom*

(1952) he reproduced this thesis in a form suitable for more general readers, together with a survey of Christian eschatological expectation throughout the centuries. Like William Temple earlier, he affirms that 'the Church must accustom itself to the idea of a vast future on the earth'. But he adds: 'If anyone wishes to add with Maldwyn Hughes that "history will be consummated by some supreme manifestation of the presence and power of Christ" . . . I shall certainly not quarrel with him' (*His Appearing and His Kingdom*, p.191). This is to the same effect as our quotation from Dr Dodd's *The Coming of Christ*.

But perhaps the most stimulating thinker in this succession is J. A. T. Robinson. In 1950 he produced a book entitled *In the End, God . . .*, in which he interpreted the doctrine of Christ's *parousia*, not as a literal event of the future, but as a symbolical or mythological presentation of 'what must happen, and is happening already, whenever the Christ comes in love and comes in power, wherever are to be traced the signs of His presence, wherever to be seen the marks of His cross. Judgment Day is a dramatized, idealized picture of every day' (p.69). More recently, in *Jesus and His Coming* (1957), he applies himself to the crucial question: Did Jesus Himself ever use language which suggested that He would return to earth from heaven? A critical examination of the data leads Dr Robinson to conclude that He did not. His sayings on the subject really express the two themes of vindication and visitation. For example, His reply to the high priest's question (Mark 14<sub>61f</sub>)—where Dr Robinson (no doubt rightly) takes the phrase "from now on" added in Matthew 26<sub>64</sub> and Luke 22<sub>69</sub> to be a genuine part of the reply—declares, in language derived from Daniel 7<sub>13</sub> and Psalm 110<sub>1</sub>, that the Son of man, though condemned by earthly judges, will be vindicated in the presence of God. Other sayings (e.g. Luke 12<sub>40</sub>; Matt. 10<sub>23</sub>; Luke 18<sub>8</sub>) apply the expression 'the coming of the Son of man' to a visitation in judgement which will be set in motion by His rejection; it will take place 'from now on' as surely as His vindication. Instead of a 'realized' eschatology, Dr Robinson speaks of an 'inaugurated' eschatology—an eschatology inaugurated by the death and Resurrection of Jesus. For His death and Resurrection did not exhaust the messianic act; on the contrary, they 'would but release and initiate that reign of God in which *henceforth* the Father's redeeming work could be brought to the fulfilment which hitherto it was denied' (p.81). As for the ministry of Jesus before His death and Resurrection, Dr Robinson applies to it some such term as 'proleptic eschatology' (p.101), because in His words and deeds the signs of the messianic age were to be seen by anticipation.

But at an early date in the Church's history the perspective was changed. The vindication was allowed to follow immediately upon Christ's death and resurrection, but the Son of man's coming in visitation was thought of as deferred.

When Jesus spoke to the high priest about the coming of the Son of man with the clouds of heaven, did He imply a coming to earth? It has generally been accepted that He did, but nowadays several authorities have pointed out that in Daniel 7<sub>13</sub>, which lies behind these words of His, 'one like a son of man' comes to the Ancient of Days (which is true), and they add the corollary that He comes not to earth but to heaven (which is questionable). Where are the thrones of Daniel 7<sub>9</sub> placed; where does the judgement take place?



If we interpret Mark 14<sub>62</sub> in the light of Mark 13<sub>26</sub>, the Son of man is evidently pictured as coming in clouds to gather His elect from earth. But there are many scholars who would not accept the discourse of Mark 13 in its present form as the unaltered teaching of Jesus, and verses 24 to 27 in particular are widely regarded as secondary, the product of that changed perspective in the early Church which also finds expression, e.g. in 2 Thessalonians 1<sub>8-10</sub>.

At this point, however, we must mention the important contributions by G. R. Beasley-Murray—*Jesus and the Future* (1954) and *A Commentary on Mark Thirteen* (1957)—in which a well-argued case is presented for the integrity and authenticity of the discourse of Mark 13. He suggests the possibility that the discourse was spoken on one occasion, but was reproduced in a fragmentary condition, so that when a Christian teacher wrote it up for the benefit of the churches it was inevitably recorded in a disjointed state (*Jesus and the Future*, p.212; cf. *A Commentary on Mark Thirteen*, p.11n.). He acknowledges that verses 24 to 27 portray the Day of the Lord in language almost wholly drawn from the prophets. 'When God steps forth for salvation the universe pales before him' (*Commentary*, p.87), and against this background of a darkened heaven the Son of man comes with clouds—to earth. He notes that the contrary interpretation of Mark 14<sub>62</sub> 'is becoming almost a new orthodoxy in Britain' (ib., p.91), but is convinced that it cannot stand. To our question, 'Where are the thrones of Daniel 7<sub>9</sub> placed; where does the judgement take place?' he answers: On earth; for he can find no other meaning in Daniel 7<sub>22</sub>, 'the Ancient of Days came', than that He came to *earth*, where 'the saints of the Most High' (the counterpart of 'one like a son of man' in verse 13) receive dominion from Him. On this showing Mark 13<sub>26</sub> need not be looked upon as a secondary recasting of Mark 14<sub>62</sub>; in both places Jesus does point forward to a coming of the Son of man to earth. Mark 14<sub>62</sub>, in fact, is the one sure Gospel text which J. E. Fison regards as unambiguously proving that Jesus did speak of His second coming (*The Christian Hope*, 1954, p.194).

Before we leave Mark 13, we may mention the unusual treatment given to this chapter in the late R. H. Lightfoot's *The Gospel Message of St Mark* (1950), pp.48ff. ('The Connexion of Chapter Thirteen with the Passion Narrative'). Here it is argued that the discourse of Mark 13 is a forecast, in apocalyptic language, of events which (in the first instance, at any rate) were fulfilled by our Lord's passion. In this case, Lightfoot remarks, Mark 13<sub>30</sub> 'becomes much less difficult than is usually supposed: "Verily I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away, until all these things be accomplished." A first fulfilment at any rate was not far off, which was itself regarded as a sign, a seal of assurance, and a sacrament of the ultimate fulfilment' (p.54).

Among significant publications in this field by Continental scholars, we may make special reference to those by W. G. Kümmel and Oscar Cullmann, not only because they are accessible in English dress, but also because of their intrinsic importance. The recent appearance of Kümmel's *Promise and Fulfilment* as No. 23 in the S.C.M. Press Studies in Biblical Theology (1957) is heartily to be welcomed. He does more justice than many scholars do to the tension between the idea of the presence of the Kingdom of God in the life and work of Jesus and the idea of its future consummation as a tension which is operative in the thought of Jesus Himself as well as of the New Testament

Church. He also does more justice to the evidence that Jesus envisaged an interval of some duration between His Resurrection and His *parousia*. For example, although Mark 13<sup>10</sup> ('and the gospel must first be preached unto all the nations') interrupts the continuity of the context in which it appears, it is an authentic 'detached saying' of Jesus which can only apply to the period before the *eschaton*. But the *eschaton* is essentially bound up with what happened when Christ came; He fulfilled the Kingdom and promised it; His promise of it is confirmed by His fulfilment of it in His life and death; His fulfilment of it in His life and death will be vindicated when His promise at last comes true.

Oscar Cullmann, who acknowledges his debt to Kümmel, has dealt with the subject in *Christ and Time* (Eng. tr., 1951) and in his essay on *The Return of Christ*, included in *The Early Church* (Eng. tr., 1956), pp.141ff. He has caught the imagination of many readers by his happy use of the analogy of D-Day and V-Day to illustrate the relation between what Christ has done and His *parousia*. Once the decisive battle of a war has been won, the final outcome is assured, although the lapse of time before that ultimate manifestation and celebration of victory is uncertain, and of relative unimportance. The *parousia* is not the decisive event for Christianity; it is the inevitable sequel of the decisive event, which took place in the death and Resurrection of Christ. The *when* of its occurrence does not matter nearly so much as the fact that its occurrence is assured.

The brilliant work done by some of our British scholars requires the corrective of these Continental colleagues. We can never go back on the achievements of Dodd and his school. They have taught us something that we needed to learn, even if they have so emphasized it as to leave another factor in the situation out of sight. But this other factor receives its proper place in the work of Kümmel and Cullmann.

With the death and resurrection of Christ eschatology has indeed been inaugurated. By his triumph the slaughtered Lamb has vindicated His title to be the effective Lord of history; this is the lesson of Revelation 5. But inauguration points on to consummation; if Christ is Lord of history, He is directing it towards its true goal. And this consummation, this goal, must be as truly bound up with His person as the inauguration was. This is why the consummation is described as the 'epiphany of His *parousia*'—'the manifestation of His presence' (2 Thess. 2<sub>8</sub>). He has been vindicated by God; but that vindication is yet to be publicly revealed and universally acknowledged. Meanwhile, we who live 'between the times'—between D-Day and V-Day—may have the present and constant assurance of His presence, His coming, His abiding, as Victor and Deliverer. The New Testament writing which dwells in greatest detail on the present vindication and exaltation of Christ admits that as yet we do not see all things put under Him, but teaches us to rest content so long as we see Jesus glorified (Heb. 2<sub>8f</sub>); this is guarantee enough that the Coming One will come (Heb. 10<sub>37</sub>). In this hope we pray 'Thy kingdom come'; we confess that Christ 'shall come to judge the quick and the dead'; and each time that we eat the bread and drink the cup we 'proclaim the Lord's death till he come'.

F. F. BRUCE

## DEMYTHOLOGIZING

IN THE years immediately following the First World War, German scholarship introduced into the field of New Testament studies a new subject, which came to be known in English-speaking circles as Form-Criticism, and which provided one of the most important and controversial debating-points with which New Testament scholars were concerned during the inter-war period. One of the pioneers of this new development, and perhaps the central figure in the controversy to which it gave rise, was Professor Rudolf Bultmann of Marburg. The years of the Second World War again witnessed the birth, in Germany, of a new approach to the New Testament, which in turn has provided the chief debating-point of scholars throughout the world during this post-war period. And again the central figure in the controversy—and indeed its instigator—is Professor Bultmann. This gives some indication of the forceful and far-reaching influence which Bultmann has exerted on the study of the New Testament in the twentieth century.

This latest controversy is one which has repercussions far beyond the limited sphere of New Testament studies as such. It is equally the concern of the philosopher and the theologian, and indeed of everyone who is engaged in the task of communicating the Christian gospel to the contemporary world. It was, in fact, the desire to solve this practical and pressing 'problem of communication' that prompted Bultmann, during the war years, to write his now famous essay entitled 'New Testament and Mythology', which began the controversy; and indeed most of those who disagree with his proposed solution of the problem have confessed themselves to be in full sympathy with Bultmann's aims and motives.

It was in the essay just referred to that Bultmann coined the term *Entmythologisierung*, a somewhat formidable German word which has been translated into English by the equally formidable 'demythologizing', and which has given its name to the whole subject. This original essay, together with a selection of the most important of the early contributions to the debate by German scholars, is now available in an English translation (*Kerygma and Myth*, edited by H. W. Bartsch, translated by R. H. Fuller, S.P.C.K., 1953). A useful summary of Bultmann's essay, together with a concise survey of the issues involved in the controversy, is provided in Professor Ian Henderson's *Myth in the New Testament* (Studies in Biblical Theology, No. 7, S.C.M. Press, 1952), which is the best introduction to the subject for the general English reader.

As its name suggests, the problem at issue in the debate is that raised by the presence of myth in the New Testament. It is of fundamental importance, therefore, to understand the sense in which Bultmann uses the word 'myth'. In the popular mind of today, of course, the word suggests simply an unhistorical tale. The stories of ancient mythology were stories about the gods and their relations with men. In a valuable study of the Greek word *mythos* (*Expository Times*, Vol. LXVIII, pp.345-8), Dr C. K. Barrett has shown that at the crucial stage (so far as the New Testament student is concerned) of its development, its meaning can best be defined as 'a story which is not itself true but represents the truth pictorially'. In this sense, it has long been recognized by the majority of biblical scholars that many of the narratives of the Old Testament, such as

the Genesis stories of the Creation and Fall of man, are myths. Bultmann's use of the word 'myth' is, however, a little different; he defines it as 'the use of imagery to express the otherworldly in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life, the other side in terms of this side'.

The starting-point of Bultmann's argument is the assertion that 'the cosmology of the New Testament is essentially mythical in character,' the world being viewed 'as a three-storied structure, with the earth in the centre, the heaven above, and the underworld beneath.' Moreover, the earth is regarded as the scene, not merely of natural, everyday events, but also of the supernatural activity of God and his angels from above, and of Satan and his demons from beneath, so that man is not in control of his own life. This mythical cosmology is presupposed as the background against which the New Testament presents the event of redemption which is the subject of its kerygma; it is in terms of mythology (derived from two sources—Gnosticism and Jewish Apocalyptic) that the saving activity of God in Jesus Christ is described. This mythical view of the world, Bultmann contends, has been rendered obsolete by modern science, so that to expect modern man to accept it is both senseless and impossible. 'It is impossible', he claims, 'to use electric light and the wireless and to avail ourselves of modern medical and surgical discoveries, and at the same time to believe in the New Testament world of demons and spirits.' So long, therefore, as the Christian message remains clothed in the mythological thought-forms of the New Testament, it must be meaningless to the modern man and powerless to evoke any response from him. It can only become intelligible and acceptable to him when it has been set free from this mythological framework, i.e. when it has been 'demythologized'.

This term 'demythologization' tends to suggest a purely negative approach which aims at the elimination from the New Testament of everything that is of a mythological character. Such an approach characterized the liberalism of fifty and more years ago, and had the effect of reducing the gospel to a set of 'timeless truths' or a few basic principles of religion and ethics. Bultmann, however, takes a very different attitude. He condemns the liberal theologians of working on the wrong lines and of throwing away, 'not only the mythology, but also the kerygma itself'. His own avowed intention is not, as did the liberals, to *eliminate* the mythology of the New Testament, but to *interpret* it; this is made clear in the sub-title that he gives to his essay, 'The Mythological Element in the Message of the New Testament and the problem of its Re-interpretation'. Bultmann insists on the preservation of the kerygma as 'the proclamation of the decisive act of God in Christ.' He believes, however, that this essential message can be set free from the mythological framework in which, in the New Testament, it is set; and that, thus freed, it can be reinterpreted in such a way as to become intelligible and relevant to the modern man for whom the mythology itself is meaningless and unacceptable. The reinterpretation which Bultmann offers is in terms of modern existentialist philosophy, as represented particularly in the works of Martin Heidegger. There is thus a positive and constructive side to Bultmann's approach, and it is not without justice that one of his supporters, Professor Friedrich Gogarten, deplores the fact that his work has received the negative title of 'demythologizing', and suggests that it would be better described in positive terms as 'the existential interpretation of the New Testament'.

This existentialist reinterpretation of the mythology of the New Testament is based upon the assumption, which Bultmann makes in his essay, that myth is to be understood anthropologically rather than cosmologically, its real purpose being 'not to present an objective picture of the world as it is, but to express man's understanding of himself in the world in which he lives.' If this is so, the New Testament writers are dealing, in mythological terms, with the same fundamental problem as the modern existentialists are grappling with, namely the problem of man's understanding of the nature of his own existence. Consequently, it is natural for Bultmann, in seeking to reinterpret the New Testament message for our day, to choose to do so in existentialist terms. He begins by demythologizing what the New Testament has to say about human existence apart from faith on the one hand, and about the life of faith on the other; man without faith is a creature haunted by anxiety, seeking to find security in the visible and tangible things of this world, whereas the life of faith is 'a life based on unseen, intangible realities', which means 'the abandonment of all self-contrived security'. This analysis corresponds to Heidegger's distinction between unauthentic and authentic being, so that Bultmann is able to claim that 'Heidegger's existentialist analysis of the ontological structure of being would seem to be no more than a secularized, philosophical version of the New Testament view of human life'. Where the modern existentialist parts company with the New Testament, says Bultmann, is in his view of the way in which man may realize his authentic being. The existentialist believes that all man needs is to be given a true understanding of his being; he can then achieve it by his own decision. The New Testament, however, insists that man cannot release himself from his fallen state, but can only be delivered by an act of God; and it proclaims that this act of God has in fact taken place in what Bultmann calls 'the event of Jesus Christ'. The crucial question for Bultmann is whether this 'event of Jesus Christ' can be demythologized. It obviously cannot, 'if to speak of an act of God at all is mythological language'. But Bultmann claims that, although Jesus Christ is presented in the New Testament as a mythical figure (the Son of God, a pre-existent divine being), He is also a concrete figure of history. 'His life is more than a mythical event; it is a human life which ended in the tragedy of crucifixion. We have here a unique combination of history and myth.' The mythological elements in the New Testament presentation of Jesus Christ are 'simply an attempt to express the meaning of the historical figure of Jesus', i.e. to show that this historical figure is the means whereby God has made it possible for man to rise from his fallen to his real existence. Thus the act of redemption as such, being 'not a miraculous supernatural event, but an historical event wrought out in time and space', is not mythological 'in the traditional sense, not the kind of mythology which has become antiquated with the decay of the mythical world view'. This act of redemption is proclaimed to man in 'the word of preaching', and he must decide whether to believe or reject it.

Such, in the barest outline, is Bultmann's 'programme for the demythologizing of the New Testament'. All modern thinkers would unhesitatingly agree with him that the cosmology of the Bible is out-of-date and can no longer be accepted literally, and so that a certain measure of demythologizing is inevitable for the effective presentation of the gospel in the modern world. We no longer



think of Hell as being literally 'down below', or of Heaven as 'above the bright blue sky'; consequently we do not interpret the doctrines of Christ's descent into Hell and His Ascension in terms of spatial movement. To that extent, most preachers have been demythologizers for a long time, though without calling themselves by such a name. It is not so much with his adoption of this method, as such, of interpreting the New Testament that Bultmann's critics have quarrelled (still less, as we noted above, with the motive which prompted him to adopt it), but rather with the excessive application which he has made of the method, and with the result which he has produced thereby. The main questions which his drastic proposals have raised in the minds of most students of the New Testament may be defined as follows: (1) Is it possible for Christianity to dispense entirely with the language of myth? (2) Can the gospel be adequately expressed in terms of current existentialism? (3) Does Bultmann's demythologized kerygma do justice to the message of the New Testament? We shall consider briefly each of these three questions.

(1) Is it possible for Christianity to dispense entirely with the language of myth? The reaction against Bultmann on this issue is seen at its strongest in the position of the Church of Hess in Germany, which insists that myth is a basic and legitimate form of human thought, and the only way in which man can grasp and describe religious objects. Similarly, Professor A. N. Wilder, in his book, *New Testament Faith for Today*, has argued that a faith like that of the New Testament requires a special language of its own in which to express itself (cf. Paul's 'interpreting spiritual truths in spiritual language', 1 Cor. 2<sub>13</sub>, R.S.V., margin); this language is the 'picture language' of poetry rather than that of prose. 'Mythology in the sense of imaginative presentation is essential in religion. The language of faith requires it and glories in it . . . to dismiss "mythology" in favour of the prose of religion is to rationalize something which cannot be rationalized to this degree.'

If this is true, it follows that a thoroughgoing demythologization of the New Testament message is impossible, and that what is required for the effective communication of the gospel in the modern world is not so much that the message should be expressed in non-mythological language, but that the hearers should be taught to understand the language of mythology. Many critics refuse to agree with Bultmann's contention that this age is not addicted to mythology. The only difference between modern mythology, as seen in the *ersatz* religions of our day, and the ancient mythology is that the former has no place for a transcendent God, and there is much truth in Henderson's suggestion that it is the transcendent rather than the mythological to which modern man objects.

(2) Can the gospel be adequately expressed in terms of current existentialism? There can be no doubt, of course, that the importance of making decisions, which existentialism regards as the distinguishing mark of man, is an essential element in the New Testament view of human life. Indeed it may be argued that, in this respect, modern existentialism owes more than it realizes to Christian thinking, especially when it is remembered that the father of the school was a great Christian thinker, Søren Kierkegaard. There is much point in the unpublished comment of an eminent New Testament scholar of our day, that the existentialists have stolen Paul's clothes while he was bathing,

and used them in order to cover their own nakedness! To recognize this common emphasis between the New Testament and existentialist thought, however, is no good reason for seeking to force the gospel into the Procrustean bed of Heidegger's philosophy—which is what Bultmann's restatement of it really amounts to. Important as the emphasis on decision is in the New Testament, it is by no means the only emphasis. And while the existentialist distinction between unauthentic and authentic being may to some extent help the modern man to appreciate what is meant by the contrast of life apart from faith in Christ and the life of faith itself, it certainly cannot do full justice to the New Testament teaching on that point.

Even if, however, it were found possible to reinterpret the Christian message adequately in the thought-forms of modern existentialism, it is extremely doubtful whether the problem of communication, as it affects the great majority of modern preachers, could be considered solved. Modern existentialist philosophy would hardly be more intelligible to the average congregation than is the mythology of the New Testament. Bultmann's efforts may possibly help to persuade modern philosophers to give a more sympathetic hearing to the claims of the gospel—and if so, that would be an achievement for which to be profoundly grateful. But for the ordinary layman, the picture-language of New Testament mythology would still seem to have a greater chance of success, provided he can be taught that such language is not to be understood in a crude literal sense.

(3) Does Bultmann's demythologized kerygma do justice to the message of the New Testament? As we have already noted, Bultmann is most anxious to preserve the essential nature of the kerygma as 'the proclamation of the decisive act of God in Christ', and finds this act of God in the objective historical fact of the life and death of Jesus. He constantly emphasizes, however, what he calls the 'eschatological' (or *geschichtlich*, as distinct from *historisch*) significance of this event: 'The cross is not just an event of the past which can be contemplated in detachment, but the eschatological event in and beyond time, for as far as its meaning—that is, its meaning for faith—is concerned, it is an ever-present reality.' That this emphasis contains a fundamental and vital truth will be readily admitted; the Cross for the Christian must always be more than just an event of the past. But Bultmann emphasizes this truth so exclusively, and sits so lightly to the historical element in Christianity, that he is in danger of converting what is essentially a historical religion into a mere philosophy. Professor Helmut Thielicke has justly said that, according to Bultmann, the really fundamental change brought about by Christ is a change in man's way of understanding himself; and Dr Karl Barth has complained that Bultmann regards the Easter Event not as something that happened to Jesus but as something that happened to the faith of the disciples. It is this excessively sceptical attitude towards the historical value of the gospel tradition, which is such a marked feature of all Bultmann's work, that seems to have led him to a presentation of the kerygma which most Christians cannot but feel to be deeply unsatisfactory. As we have seen, Bultmann himself has to call a halt to the process of demythologizing when he comes to the decisive act of God in the event of Jesus Christ, and he justifies himself on the ground that there we have 'an historical event wrought out in time and space', and so 'a unique combination of history



and myth'. Those who take a less radical view than Bultmann does of the historical value of the gospel tradition will naturally feel that this 'unique combination of history and myth' covers a much broader area than it does for him. In Jesus Christ, the Word made Flesh, and in all that happened to Him on the plane of history, the otherworldly was really present in terms of this world and the divine in terms of human life. And if such a unique series of events is to be described at all (and the Christian gospel can hardly be proclaimed without reference to them), it is difficult to see how, on Bultmann's definition of myth, that can be done in any other than mythological terms. OWEN E. EVANS

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## ALLEGORICAL INTERPRETATION

THE ALLEGORICAL method of interpretation has been used by Christian readers of the Bible from the earliest days of the Church until the present time. It is true that from time to time its employment has been deprecated by certain leading exegetes, generally by way of reaction against the extravagances of over-ingenious allegorists, and that some theological schools have tended to limit its use and to prefer the literal meaning of Scripture; thus the theologians of Antioch used it sparingly, and on the whole succeeded in expounding the Bible historically; and Luther reacted against certain forms of allegorism which had become conventional in medieval theology. It is only in modern times, however, with the rise of critical scholarship, that the Bible has come to be studied by historical methods alone. The modern scholar is concerned with the literal meaning of the text, and with nothing else. He may have to delve deeply below the superficial sense of a passage in order to elucidate its full significance and to discover what associations the Biblical writer's words may have conveyed to himself and his hearers. Such a scholar may perhaps interpret the passage typologically; but if his interpretation belongs to the sphere of genuine historical typology it will still be concerned with the literal or historical meaning of the text. The critical reader will never allegorize.

This, however, is by no means true of the ordinary worshipper. In our modern liturgical and devotional use of the Scriptures allegory continues to play an important part, just as it has done throughout the centuries. It is partly because of this difference in the two methods of approach to Scripture that

we have had to grow accustomed to that dangerous distinction between the 'devotional' use of the Bible and the 'academic' study of it. In its present form this is a comparatively modern phenomenon. Of course, there have always been different ways of using the scriptures, corresponding to the various intentions of the reader. A student of the history of the kings of Israel and Judah would always tend to use the Old Testament in a somewhat different fashion from that of the dogmatic theologian or the preacher. Nevertheless, the present-day distinction between devotional and other kinds of Bible reading goes deeper than this. It indicates an essential difference in the spirit in which the reader approaches his task. Devotional Bible reading will not necessarily involve any suspension of the critical judgement; it certainly ought not to imply any inattention to the literal meaning of the text or any failure to carry out the laborious process of seeking to establish the original intention of the biblical writer in the situation in which he actually wrote; but it does mean that the reader will be looking primarily for instruction. He will be seeking guidance in his everyday conduct, and he will look for examples to help him in his moral endeavour and encourage him in the spiritual life. It is precisely for this purpose that the reader will have recourse to allegory, and it is in no small measure due to this fact that the devotional reader tends to allegorize while the academic student does not, that the modern distinction between the two kinds of Bible study has emerged.

We must not jump to the conclusion that the allegorical method ought to be discarded and that its use is incompatible with the critical approach to Scripture. Throughout the ages it has served two principal purposes: it has helped the reader to overcome difficulties presented by the literal sense of the text, and it has enabled the reader, and especially the preacher, to derive moral instruction from almost every part of the Scriptures, including those which at first sight might appear to be barren of material for edification. The allegorical method is thus essentially didactic. It is an instrument of instruction and exhortation.

In its negative aspect, as a means by which stumbling-blocks in the path of literal exegesis may be circumvented, it still plays an important part in the liturgical use of the Bible. It is only on the basis of allegory that the imprecatory psalms can be incorporated without offence into Christian public worship. Babylon, Moab, and the unnamed objects of such cursing psalms as the 109th, have always stood, in the minds of Christian worshippers, for the spiritual enemies of the People of God. The erotic imagery of the Song of Songs has been rendered suitable for religious meditation through its interpretation as an allegory either of Christ and the Church or, in a less satisfactory mystical sense, of Christ and the individual soul. From the days of Philo onwards, the apparently sub-Christian behaviour of certain of the patriarchs has been interpreted in relation to allegorical identifications of the characters in Genesis with moral virtues and vices, so that the obvious offence has been mitigated. Allegorism has thus served to smooth the way of the Christian Bible-reader. It has also proved its value as a weapon for the apologist, at least in the somewhat negative sense of a means by which hostile criticism of the Scriptures could be disarmed. In the patristic period, especially, the uncouth 'barbarism' of parts of the Old Testament repelled many potential readers. Not only was the language inelegant, but the subject matter often appeared to be offensive or absurd. By the

use of allegory, these obstacles in the way of the apologist could be largely removed and the crudities of the literal sense replaced by hidden meanings, full of ethical and spiritual edification, mysteriously concealed under the outward form. Thus the provisions of the Law concerning clean and unclean animals could be turned into a vehicle for moral instruction.

Apologetic motives, however, are generally of secondary importance as an explanation of the development of the allegorical method. The primary object of the allegorist is to edify the believer, and to provide the preacher and the teacher with a scriptural foundation for homilies and instructions. By this means the Biblical narratives can be induced to provide the preacher and his hearers with examples. The story of David and Goliath, or the exploits of Gideon and Samson, become typical of the valour and fortitude which the Christian ought to exhibit in the spiritual warfare against the hosts of Satan. With sufficient ingenuity the preacher can extend the allegory to include every detail of the narrative. Thus David's 'five smooth stones out of the brook' are occasionally made to refer to baptism, sometimes with an allusion to the five books of the Pentateuch as well; and it is probably this interpretation which accounts for the appearance of the combat of David and Goliath among the frescoes in the baptistery at Dura. In the same way the details of the Mosaic food laws are made to furnish moral examples. Animals which chew the cud and part the hoof represent those who ruminate on the divine law and hasten to execute God's commandments. Mr Milburn, in his Bampton Lectures, *Christian Interpretations of History* (p.47), quotes Origen's *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (ii.9):

'My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold he standeth behind our wall, he looketh in at the windows, he glanceth through the lattice.' The house in which the Church is dwelling is the Holy Scripture of the Law and the Prophets. Christ at first stands behind the wall of the Old Testament and therefore remains unseen by those inside. But in due time He shows himself at the window and summons the Church, who is seated within, to leave the house and join Him. His call and invitation, therefore, is to pass from the fleshly to the spiritual, from things visible to things invisible, from the Law to the Gospel.

Such allegorism treats the Biblical text as though it consisted everywhere of parables; and it is important for our purpose to notice that the parables which are thus read out of the narratives, the legal provisions and the poetry of the Scriptures are not parables like those of Christ—dynamic expressions of the Gospel, conveying the message of the Kingdom to those who have the insight to understand. Parables in this latter sense are effective signs and embodiments, as it were, of the Gospel itself. In a sense, they have what is virtually a sacramental character. The parables of the allegorist are parables in the weaker sense of examples and illustrations. That, in fact, is exactly what they are. They are sermon illustrations.

Biblical allegories have always supplied the Christian preacher with much of his material. They continue to do so in our present-day pulpits. Many of the traditional sermon illustrations furnished by Scriptural allegory are effective and valuable. We need not concern ourselves with those preachers whose delight it is to extract sermons from the most unlikely and unpromising texts—the ethical symbolism of such objects as Hezekiah's poultice of figs need not now

detain us. There remains a regular tradition in preaching, public worship, and private Bible study which has drawn inspiration and edification from the illustrations and examples provided by Scriptural allegories. It is a tradition which possesses an obvious value and which cannot be dismissed as illegitimate, within its own sphere.

The question remains, however, whether the allegorical method of edification can also rank as a method of exegesis. Is it a proper means by which the Word of God can be discerned in the Bible and expounded. We have to notice, in the first place, that allegory, in the sense in which we have applied the term, is by no means peculiar to the Christian use of the Bible. As we have recently been reminded in R. M. Grant's book, *The Letter and the Spirit*, the allegorical method had a notable history in pre-Christian Hellenism. Its chief uses were to remove from the poets, especially Homer, what would appear to be crude, absurd or immoral episodes and sayings, so as to enable the poets to be used as a vehicle of moral edification and to allow the philosophers, particularly the Stoics, to read their tenets out of the ancient literature. Here, too, we find the same combination as in Christianity of didactic and apologetic motives. From the tradition of the Alexandrian grammarians, critics, and philosophers, the method passes over to Philo and Hellenistic Judaism. The Old Testament text becomes a medium through which the philosophically-minded reader can gain instruction and moral edification. The migration of Abraham is no longer important as history, not even as part of the history of God's dealings with the Covenant people. It is now an illustration of the progress of the soul from the sphere of sense-perception through the realm of the intellect to the goal of contemplation.

Rabbinic Judaism also used allegory, and a good example of the method is provided by St Paul when, employing, no doubt, the rabbinic technique, he rejects the literal sense of the commandment, 'Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn', and applies it arbitrarily to the Christian missionary and his financial maintenance. On the other hand, pure allegory of this kind is very rare in the New Testament. Perhaps this is the only true instance of it, if we discount the allegorical parables in the Gospels, which are not concerned with the interpretation of the Scriptures even though they may occasionally include allegorical themes from the Old Testament, such as the vineyard in the Parable of the Wicked Husbandmen. St Paul's use of the story of Isaac and Ishmael might be regarded as a genuine piece of allegorical interpretation, but, in spite of the Apostle's use of the term, it may be doubted whether this is an example of pure allegory of the kind which we have noticed above. It is not simply by discarding the literal historical meaning of the Ishmael story that we find in it a useful illustration of election and rejection. Rather, we are asked to seek in the divine election of Isaac and rejection of Ishmael a foreshadowing or 'preview' of the choice of the new people of God and the rejection of the old. The actual historical episode of Hagar is part of the same pattern of divine action as the election of the Christian Church in which indeed the pattern culminates. The Old Testament story is seen as a type rather than as a true allegory.

The Apostle's use of the narrative of the crossing of the Red Sea and the wilderness wanderings is nearer to allegory in the proper sense. It is employed as a kind of sermon illustration with a moral purpose, to warn the Corinthians

against the perils of yielding to temptation, and backsliding. Here again, however, St Paul's use of the Old Testament example seems to be of a somewhat different kind from the method which he employed to turn the precept against muzzling the ox into a warrant for his teaching that the missionary ought to receive support from his converts. In the latter case the allegory is arbitrarily selected. The literal sense of the passage has no connexion, apart from some association of ideas in the mind of the interpreter, with the meaning given to it in the allegory. There is no ontological connexion between the facts with which the Old Testament writer was dealing and the situation to which the Christian interpreter applies his predecessor's words. In the case of the Corinthians and the Israelites, however, there is a much closer relationship between the two. A genuine historical link exists between the people of the Old Covenant in the situation of the Exodus and their successors, Christians who believed themselves to belong to the same people of God, in the situation of their deliverance from heathen bondage, their following of the new and greater Moses, their baptism and their feeding on the bread of heaven and drinking from the rock which is Christ. Christian conversion and participation in the Christian sacraments are recognizably part of a pattern of God's saving activity in history which can already be discerned in the great moment of pre-Christian redemption, when the Covenant was first established. The attempt to draw a detailed parallel between the wilderness wanderings and the perilous situation of the Corinthian converts may be far-fetched, but the general comparison is defensible on historical grounds. The literal meaning of the Old Testament passage is not denied. The sense of it is not allegorized, if we mean by allegory a transposition of the meaning of a passage from one theme to something different. The original sense and the application are both, so to speak, in the same plane, the plane of history and the continuous activity of God in delivering his covenant people. The exodus events are treated as a foreshadowing, preview or type of an historical fulfilment.

Allegory, as opposed to historical typology, discloses no ontological connexion between the literal narrative and the moral or spiritual situation to which it is applied. The application is in no way contained in or entailed by the literal meaning of the original. The moral or spiritual sense which is read out of the passage is not connected with it except in the mind of the interpreter, who may, of course, legitimately derive his sermon illustrations from an unlimited range of hitherto unrelated material. Thus the preacher of a children's sermon will probably work out associations of ideas taken from trains, ships or cars to drive home his moral and spiritual instruction. The only conceivable real, as opposed to imaginary or artificial, link between the literal and allegorical meanings of a text would consist of an underlying 'spiritual sense' intended by the original writer, or by a power inspiring him unconsciously, for which the literal meaning is no more than a disguise.

This is, of course, the theory on which traditional allegorism has been based. It depended on the assumption that the literal sense is but the outward husk in which there lies contained and concealed an inner kernel of spiritual truth. The 'letter' is of little or no value; it is the earthly or sensible form, the earthen vessel, in which the treasures of divine wisdom have been laid up, to be revealed to the reader who can penetrate the external covering and extract the inward significance.



The allegorists of Homer put forward various theories to account for the way in which eternal truths of philosophy had found veiled expression in the poems. Most of these relate to the concept of a primitive wisdom overlaid by the forms of popular religion; some are akin to the common Christian belief that poets borrowed their wisdom from the East (from Moses, according to the Christian apologists). For the Christian the problem was in some respects more simple. His answer to it was that hidden wisdom lies concealed beneath the letter of the Scriptures because the Holy Spirit has directly inspired its authors, and it is because the earthly and carnal has been chosen to become the vehicle of the heavenly and spiritual that God has seen fit to dictate moral and spiritual wisdom to the biblical writers in this fashion. The treasures of divine truth, moreover, must not be lightly thrown before the eyes of the profane multitude. The Holy Spirit has hidden them under the cloak of the letter, and they may be brought out into the open only by those whom the same Holy Spirit inspires to understand them. The method, in fact, rests upon a particular theory of inspiration. If the allegorical interpretation is to have the force of 'Scripture', or rank as the Word of God, the whole Bible must be accepted as an inspired book, in every page and line of which the Holy Spirit has written eternal truths, sometimes revealed in the literal meaning of the text and sometimes concealed beneath its surface. The Bible must be regarded as a book of mysteries.

The question then arises how, on the assumption that the Bible is inspired in this sense, the reader can find the guidance of the Spirit to lead him to the true interpretation of its hidden wisdom. Certain clues can help him along the first part of the way. Rules, such as those laid down in the fourth century by Tyconius, will tell him that there must be concealed allegories in those parts of Scripture which appear on the surface to be obscure or offensive. The *immensa silva* of apparently barren and unedifying passages indicates likely quarries for the unearthing of hidden treasure. Yet beyond these first steps the interpreter has no clear directions. The writer of the *Epistle of Barnabas*, an ingenious allegorist if ever there was one, speaks of a *gnosis* which enables him to understand such mysteries as the indication of Jesus and the Cross in the number of Abraham's servants. This *gnosis*, however, amounts to no more than the interpreter's own ingenuity, together with that of previous expositors handed down in the didactic tradition of the Church and Hellenistic Judaism. There is accordingly no check on the fancy of the interpreter, apart from the limits which may possibly be imposed by the traditional conventions of theological schools. There can be no assurance that an ingenious allegory is inspired by the Holy Spirit, and hence there can be no guarantee that an allegorically expounded passage of Scripture conveys a word of God. Even on the assumption that the Bible is a book of mysteries concealed under apparently simple literal meanings, the allegorist finds himself without any reliable key with which to unlock them. There can be no proof that the particular symbolism which he may find in a Biblical text is the right one—that is, the one which the original author, under the guidance of the Spirit, actually put into it. Allegorism involves a reading into the text, rather than an exposition of it; and the reader who approaches the Bible in this way is trying to impose a preconceived meaning of his own upon the Scriptural text. Although the method rests ultimately upon a peculiar form of the doctrine

of verbal inspiration, it results, in the last resort, in a fundamental denial of the inherent authority of the words of Scripture, which reduces the supposedly sacred text to subservience to its human interpreters.

Allegorism, therefore, is not properly a method of exegesis; nor is it a means by which the preacher or teacher can legitimately seek to buttress his moral and spiritual instruction with the authority of Scripture. Allegorical interpretation is arbitrary and artificial, a construction put upon the text by the reader's own ingenuity. It can claim no valid authority as Scripture. Must we, then, admit that since it cannot provide us with anything more solid than edifying sermon illustrations, there is no convincing reason why it should be applied to the Bible in preference to any other literature? Might not the preacher draw his allegorical examples from a secular novel or poem as suitably as from the Old or New Testament?

It is certainly true that there is no inherent reason why the Song of Songs should make a better allegorical illustration of the love of Christ for the Church than any other great love song. The progress of the soul in the spiritual life could be depicted as clearly in secular travel stories as in the geographical facts of the migration of Abraham or the wanderings of Israel in the wilderness. The one allegory could claim no higher inspiration than the other. At the same time, the preacher who uses the Bible for his illustrations has certain definite advantages. His material will be familiar, at least if his audience consists of regular churchgoers, and his illustrations will be drawn from a store of traditional material which has proved its value to a long succession of Christian teachers. The well-known Biblical allegories are well tried; they are likely to be the most effective for their purpose. Often, too, as in the Song of Songs and the spiritual interpretation of the imprecatory Psalms, they have been incorporated in the structure of Christian devotion and consecrated by their constant association with prayer and praise.

On the other hand, the preacher who makes use of allegory in this way ought to do so very sparingly and cautiously, bearing in mind that he is in some measure distorting the true—that is, the original—meaning of the text. [The Bible mediates to us God's self-revelation in history. Its importance lies in the very fact that it embodies the historical record of God's dealings with His people, culminating in the incarnation of the Son of God and the historical acts of God in the life and work of Christ.] Allegorical interpretation translates the Bible into non-historical terms, undermining the essential historical basis of the gospel. We have learned that the parables of Jesus must not be read as though they were mere illustrations of general moral and spiritual principles. They are instruments for the dynamic presentation of the gospel. [The story of the Prodigal Son is not a general allegory intended to illustrate how fathers and sons ought to behave towards each other. The meaning of the narrative of the man with the withered hand was lost when Isidore of Seville decided to treat it as a general illustration of the principle that ungenerous conduct causes atrophy, but when the hand is stretched forth in almsgiving it is cured.]

The Bible, both in the New Testament and in the Old, is the record of the saving acts of God and His self-revelation in historical events. Allegorism transforms the records of actual and particular historical events into pictorial illustrations of general moral and spiritual principles, and so changes their

whole significance. It is true that allegory occurs in the Bible itself, and it is to be found there not only in St Paul's misapplication of the law concerning the threshing ox. The parable of the Wicked Husbandmen is allegorical. The story of the miracle at Cana and, many scholars would add, the rest of the Johannine miracle narratives and perhaps some of those in the Synoptic Gospels, are intended by the evangelist to bear an allegorical meaning. In these instances, however, the allegory does not illustrate some general moral principle. It demonstrates the nature of the historical revelation of God in Christ, and indicates the character and purpose of His saving work. These allegories are more closely akin to parables (including acted parables) than is Origen's allegorical exposition of the Good Samaritan.

Typology is a form of allegorical interpretation; but it rests upon different presuppositions, and operates by different principles, from those of the kind of allegory which we have been considering. It seeks to discover an inner meaning in certain Biblical passages, a meaning which is not apparent on the surface. This concealed sense, however, is not chosen arbitrarily and read into the text. It consists in actual correspondences, discerned by the Biblical writers, between different historical episodes. The literal meaning is not denied or ignored. The Levitical sacrifices are seen by the writer to the Hebrews as a type of Christ's sacrifice because a certain pattern of offering and atonement, discernible in man's relations with God in the Old Covenant, is seen to be repeated, and made complete, in the work of Christ. The Second Isaiah sees a correspondence between God's work in creation, His redemption of Israel through the Exodus, and the promise of His rescue of the people from Babylon. For Christians the true meaning of the Exodus is illuminated by Christ's death and Resurrection; a single pattern of God's saving activity runs through both events. The typologist interprets one event in terms of another, but his exegesis moves within the sphere of history throughout.

Typology is a legitimate method of exegesis. It represents a way of looking at history which was followed by the Biblical writers themselves. Again, however, we need a criterion for distinguishing the genuine historical correspondence from the purely imaginary connexion made by an ingenious interpreter between two incidents which have no real relationship to each other. We are on safe ground in dealing with those Old Testament passages which Jesus seems deliberately to have selected as keynotes for His own mission and which He enacted—the Servant songs, the Son of Man passages, the prophecy of the entry into Jerusalem. We are fairly safe in discerning certain general ways in which Old Testament types are fulfilled—the Exodus, Moses, the sacrifices, and so on. There is a broad correspondence between these types and the Person and work of Christ. More detailed typology is often artificial and far-fetched. We ought to be very careful in trying to discern types where the New Testament writers themselves give no clear indication that they were thinking typologically; we ought to test such typological interpretation as we allow by reference to the consistency of the whole witness of Scripture; and we must never make typology the sole foundation for authoritative statements of doctrine. G. W. H. LAMPE

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## THE NEW TESTAMENT: RECENT DISCOVERIES

**L**EARNED HYPOTHESES about the New Testament issue from the presses in an unceasing stream; genuine discoveries, which make possible substantial and not merely conjectural advances in biblical studies, are not so common. The last quarter of a century, however, has been rich in discovery, and there may therefore be value in a brief review of the most important finds. This review is necessarily confined to MSS., either of or specifically connected with the New Testament, though, of course, all archaeological discoveries that illuminate the ancient world contribute to our understanding of the New Testament in terms of its background; it gives an exhaustive account of nothing, but may serve to indicate the way in which our knowledge of the early text, and of the early interpretation, of the New Testament is growing, and to suggest further lines of inquiry.

1. *The Chester Beatty Papyri*.<sup>1</sup> This collection of MSS. was bought by Mr Chester Beatty in 1931, though it subsequently appeared that some leaves belonging to it had found their way independently to Princeton University, and some to Michigan University. It comprises both Old Testament and New Testament MSS.<sup>2</sup> The New Testament leaves were drawn from three separate codices, one containing the Gospels and Acts (of which only fragments are preserved), another containing the Pauline Epistles including Hebrews (much more nearly complete), and a third containing Revelation. In the *apparatus criticus* of the New Testament, these three MSS. are denoted by the sigla P<sup>45</sup>, P<sup>46</sup>, and P<sup>47</sup>. They may all be dated in the third century, and when they were discovered constituted the earliest substantial New Testament MSS.

This early date (a century or so older than the great uncial codices Vaticanus and Sinaiticus) once established on palaeographical grounds, the next task was to study their text and to compare it with the evidence of the other great MSS., families, and types of antiquity. So far more work has been done on the Gospel MS. than on the other two, and it is to this that we shall give our attention. Scholars are not completely agreed in their estimate of the text of P<sup>45</sup>, but it seems to be most closely related to (though it is not identical with) the so-called Caesarean text.<sup>3</sup> If this conclusion may be accepted its importance is scarcely open to doubt. As long ago as 1936, Streeter wrote: 'The evidence that a form of this text existed in Egypt in the third century, as well as in Caesarea (as vouched for by quotations in the later works of Origen and in Eusebius), must enhance our estimate of its importance for the textual criticism of the Gospels.'<sup>4</sup> This is true; but we must add that the effect of this important discovery was to call in question Streeter's theory of 'Local Texts' as a whole. If the type of text before us was used in Alexandria as well as in Caesarea, it is no doubt doubly important; but can we properly describe it as a *local* text? It is highly doubtful whether we can do so—especially when we remember that only a little while before P<sup>45</sup> was written Origen's predecessor as head of the Catechetical School at Alexandria, Clement, was using a *Western* text. It would be wrong to say that Streeter's theory of local texts is discredited; but it does need to be rethought.<sup>5</sup>

The Chester Beatty Papyri are all codices.<sup>6</sup> This is a fact of more than palaeographical importance. Because of its physical characteristics, it was much

easier to put papyrus into the form of a roll than into that of a codex. It is not surprising therefore that libraries of pagan works consist almost entirely of rolls; what is surprising is that so many of the earliest Christian papyri prove to be codices. The most probable explanation of the development of the Christian papyrus codex is that Christian readers desired to keep together larger quantities of written material than the limited space of a single roll would permit. This would imply that the four Gospels, for example, were not thought of as interesting but individual biographies; they were part of a sacred literature, so that it was desirable, if possible, to have all four in one book. The inevitable result of this desire was the development of the codex, and if vellum codices could not be had, then papyrus would have to be used.<sup>7</sup>

2. *Rylands Papyrus 457*. This fragment was edited in 1935 under the title, *An unpublished Fragment of the Fourth Gospel*.<sup>8</sup> Palaeographers consider that it was written not later than A.D. 150, and it is probably the oldest known MS. of the New Testament. Unfortunately, it contains only 18<sub>31, 32, 33, 37, 38</sub>; but the following points about it are significant: (a) It proves that the Fourth Gospel can no longer be thought of as having originated in the middle of the second century.<sup>9</sup> (b) It formed part of a codex.<sup>10</sup> (c) Its text shows no features of special interest—in itself an interesting fact, for, small though the fragment is, it is not insignificant that the oldest New Testament MS. in existence, written scarcely more than fifty years (and perhaps much less) after the Fourth Gospel was composed, gives us the same text of the Gospel as the well-known printed editions.

3. *Egerton Papyrus 2*. This document was published in the same year as the Rylands papyrus, and it is of the same date. Unlike the Rylands papyrus, however, it is not a New Testament MS., but contains part of an 'Unknown Gospel',<sup>11</sup> a work which has the form of a Gospel in that it contains deeds and sayings of Jesus, but can be identified neither with any one of our four Gospels, nor with any known apocryphal Gospel. Its contents may be summarized as follows:

(a) A dispute between Jesus and the lawyers, containing close parallels to John 5<sub>29, 45, 929</sub>.

(b) The healing of a leper, similar to that of Mark 1<sub>40-5</sub>, but with an added note telling how the leper contracted his disease. There is also an unsuccessful attempt to stone Jesus.

(c) The question about tribute, here asked in the form, Is it lawful to render to kings that which pertains to their rule? Cf. Mark 12<sub>13-17</sub> and parallels. The reply is not as in Mark, but contains first a parallel to Luke 6<sub>46</sub> (Why do you call me Teacher, and do not do what I say?), and then a reference to Isaiah 29<sub>13</sub> (quoted in Mark 7<sub>6</sub>).

(d) Apparently a miracle, though here the fragment breaks off and it is impossible to be certain of its meaning. Jesus sprinkles water on the bank of the River Jordan, and it grows up like seed and bears fruit.

That this material is in some way related to the gospel tradition seems certain: but to say this is to leave open a number of questions. (a) Did the author of the 'Unknown Gospel' use one or more of our Gospels? (b) Did one or more of our Evangelists use the 'Unknown Gospel'? (c) Did all alike, independently of each other, use common traditions? It is of course possible that two or more of these



suggestions should be combined. That the unknown author was dependent on the Fourth Gospel has been shown to be probable by Professor C. H. Dodd<sup>12</sup>, and there is no reason why he should not have known one or more of the Synoptic Gospels too, but it would be wrong to suppose that when his 'Gospel' was written the stream of oral tradition had dried up. There is much here for students of the synoptic problem to consider.

4. *The Dura Parchment*. In 1912, Souter wrote: 'It may be safely said that the original Greek of Tatian's book [the Diatessaron] is a more desirable possession for the textual critic of the Gospels than almost anything else yet undiscovered.'<sup>13</sup> This is not simply because we should like to see the text of the Diatessaron, but because its very existence presents us with a riddle. The Syriac Fathers leave us in no doubt of the existence of the Diatessaron in Syriac (though we have no MS. of it); there is fair evidence of its existence in Latin;<sup>14</sup> but there is—or was, when Souter wrote—no evidence for its existence in Greek.<sup>15</sup> Yet how could the Diatessaron have been circulated in *both* Latin and Syriac without a Greek original? It seemed at first that the problem had been solved by the discovery at Dura-Europos, on the Euphrates,<sup>16</sup> of a MS., fragmentary it is true, of the Diatessaron in Greek. It is to be dated at c. A.D. 225, almost, that is, within a generation of Tatian himself. The text may be literally translated as follows:

1. . . . of Zebedee, and Salome, and the wives
2. of those who had followed him from
3. Galilee, to see him who was crucified. And it was
4. the Preparation Day. Sabbath was dawn-
5. ing. When it was late on the Prepara-
6. tion, which is the day before Sabbath, there
7. came a man who was a counsellor,
8. from Erinmathaea, a city of
9. Judaea, whose name was Joseph, a good man,
10. righteous, who was a disciple of Jesus but se-
11. cretly for fear of the
12. Jews. And he was expecting
13. the kingdom of God. This man had not
14. been in agreement with the plan. . . .

Here then appears to be the lost Greek original of the Diatessaron. But this appearance is probably illusory. In these fourteen lines there are no fewer than two curious readings which are best explained as due to mistranslation of Syriac. In lines 1 and 2 (cf. Luke 23<sub>49</sub>), 'wives of those who had followed', is probably due to misunderstanding of the Syriac particle *dē*, which serves both as the relative ('women *who* had followed') and as the sign of the genitive ('wives of *those who* had followed'). In line 8 the unique form Erinmathaea differs from Arimathaea in Syriac only by the substitution of the letter *nun* for the letter *yodh*; and these are particularly easy to confuse in Syriac. In all probability therefore our 'Greek Diatessaron' was translated from Syriac for the benefit of the mixed, mercantile population of Dura. It is right to add that this view is not shared by Dr C. H. Kraeling, who edited the fragment.<sup>17</sup>

5. *The Dead Sea Scrolls*. On this subject, one is inclined to suggest that, after one decade of vigorous pamphleteering, the next might be profitably spent

in silent assimilation of the documents discovered in the Dead Sea area in and since 1947. Too much has been written too quickly for a great deal of it to have any permanent value—though some of it of course is very valuable indeed.<sup>18</sup>

The Old Testament MSS. discovered in the Qumran region do not concern us here, save in so far as they represent part of the activity of a community which existed in or near New Testament times. That this community and its works are of absorbing interest, and that no one occupied with the study of the New Testament period can afford to neglect them, is beyond all reasonable doubt. Yet what impresses one student of the New Testament most, as he reflects upon the work of the last ten years, is how little that is really new the Dead Sea Scrolls have given us. Already in 1947 we knew that Jewish religious communities existed, and that they practised lustrations, ate common meals, and valued the Old Testament and other Scriptures. We knew that they gave the Old Testament their own, and sometimes very odd, interpretations, that they taught (many of them) a high and pure morality, and that they held various complicated forms of messianic hope. All this we now know (so far as one sect is concerned) with far greater vividness and detail; but in this there is nothing to revolutionize New Testament studies, or even the study of Judaism.

Many attempts have been made to identify the sect responsible for the Scrolls. The Pharisees, the Sadducees, the Essenes, the Zealots have all been suggested. Each suggestion can claim support from the evidence, some more than others; each encounters difficulties. It seems best to recognize that the evidence is not unambiguous, and to draw the conclusion that the life of Judaism was even richer in variety than we already knew it to be. That there was a 'Dead Sea Sect' is undeniable, but it does not follow from this that it must necessarily be one of those already known to us from the all too scanty records of the turbulent period before A.D. 135. The evidence previously known was enough to suggest that groups such as the Pharisees and the Essenes were not indivisible units, and since the Sectarrians did not (in the literature so far known) see fit to attach a recognizable label to themselves, it is probably fruitless to attempt to discover one that will do.

Personal identifications of the 'Teacher of Righteousness', the 'Wicked Priest', and the rest of the *dramatis personae* of the Scrolls, will be equally or even more precarious if Dr Gaster is right in seeing behind these terms offices rather than persons. To say this is not to deny that real events may lie behind the allusive language of, for example, the Habakkuk Commentary, since in a commentary of this kind the essential aim is to find the fulfilment of ancient prediction in contemporary history. But it is right here to add that neither the Habakkuk Commentary, nor any other Scroll, says that the 'Teacher of Righteousness' (if he was a real person) uttered the kind of teaching we read in the Gospels, died for men's sins (or even died a violent death), and rose from the dead; or even claimed that he was the Messiah.

In short, the Dead Sea Scrolls must be placed along with the Apocalypses, the Mishnah, the early Midrashim, and other works, which cast light upon the Jewish background of the New Testament, and show how varied, and how open to extraneous influences, that background was.<sup>19</sup>

6. *The Nag Hammadi MSS.* At about the time when the first Dead Sea

Scrolls were discovered there came to light, with much less publicity, a number of Coptic codices at Nag Hammadi, in Egypt. Publication of these MSS. has unfortunately been slow; so far we have before us only *The Gospel of Truth*.<sup>20</sup> This alone, however, is sufficient to show the great importance of the find, which appears to have come from a Gnostic settlement. We may hope to recover from it first-hand information about Gnostic beliefs which hitherto have been known for the most part through the works of anti-Gnostic writers such as Irenaeus and Hippolytus.

Irenaeus himself<sup>21</sup> reports that the Valentinians produced a work called *The Gospel of Truth*. The document before us opens with the words, 'The Gospel of Truth is joy for those who have received the grace of knowing, from the Father of Truth, through the power of the Word, Him, come forth from the Pleroma, who is immanent in the thought and in the mind of the Father, who is He whom they call the Saviour', and it is probably the Valentinian work—possibly by Valentinus himself. It is a wordy and tortuous composition, and cannot easily be summarized, but it tells clearly enough the Gnostic story of redemption. Ignorance of the Father led to anguish and terror. Error produced matter as a substitute for truth, and so took prisoner those who stood midway between mind and matter. Jesus came to bring Gnosis, by which men know the Father, and to act as guide; this enraged Error, who nailed him to the Cross. He thus himself entered into the terror, that he might lead to the Father those who are in the book of the living. All this is set forth in a more attractive form than Gnosticism usually bears, but even so its excessive tendency to speculate about heavenly emanations and pleromas, and its docetism, are evident enough.

*The Gospel of Truth* appears to allude to many New Testament writings, which we must therefore suppose to have been in use, at least by Gnostics, fairly early in the second century.

7. *Bodmer Papyrus 2*. One of the latest discoveries is a MS. of the Fourth Gospel, to be dated c. A.D. 200. It is not complete, but contains most of John 1-14, and there is hope that other leaves (it is a codex) may be recovered.<sup>22</sup> I have given a preliminary account of its text elsewhere,<sup>23</sup> and must here be content to point out that, like P<sup>45</sup>, it refuses to be easily classified. It often coincides with the Alexandrian texts, but has also points of contact with other types, and sometimes gives readings which, early as they are, can be reasonably shown to be corrupt. This means that one more witness has risen up against the theory of local texts, at least in the simple form in which Streeter stated it. Circumstances may well have been different elsewhere, but in Alexandria at any rate many types of text were known.

*Conclusions.* The following points are perhaps worth making.

(a) The Jewish background of the New Testament was very various. It may well prove that some parts of the New Testament hitherto supposed to be of Hellenistic origin drew their Hellenism through a Jewish channel.

(b) The New Testament text may be reckoned fairly secure. It is very unlikely that our ordinary printed Greek Testaments differ widely from the apostolic text.

(c) We remain however very ignorant about the history of the New Testament text in the second century, and much work awaits the textual critic.<sup>24</sup>

(d) Hardly any part of the New Testament can be with any probability relegated to a date late in the second century.

(e) Primitive Christianity is rooted in Judaism, but it very early made itself at home in Gnostic circles.

C. K. BARRETT

<sup>1</sup> Edited by F. G. Kenyon (1933-7); also H. A. Sanders (1935), for the Michigan Papyrus.

<sup>2</sup> Also a *Homily on the Passion*, by Melito of Sardis, and a Greek version of the last chapters of 1 Enoch.

<sup>3</sup> See B. H. Streeter, *The Four Gospels* (Fifth Impression, 1936), pp.77-107.

<sup>4</sup> Op. cit., p.viii.

<sup>5</sup> See above, p.121.

<sup>6</sup> As are the Rylands and Bodmer papyri; see below.

<sup>7</sup> See E. M. Thompson, *An Introduction to Greek and Latin Palaeography* (1912), pp.44-53; also (for a somewhat different view), C. H. Roberts, 'The Codex', in *Proceedings of the British Academy*, XL (1954), pp.169-204.

<sup>8</sup> By C. H. Roberts. In the apparatus this papyrus is P<sup>62</sup>.

<sup>9</sup> At the same time the question is raised whether it was written in Ephesus or Alexandria; see J. N. Sanders, *The Fourth Gospel in the Early Church* (1943), pp.39-43.

<sup>10</sup> See above.

<sup>11</sup> *Fragments of an Unknown Gospel and Other Early Christian Papyri*, edited by H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat (1935).

<sup>12</sup> *New Testament Studies* (1953), pp.12-52.

<sup>13</sup> *The Text and Canon of the New Testament* (1912), p.56.

<sup>14</sup> Codex Fuldensis of the Vulgate, and the Old Dutch harmonies.

<sup>15</sup> Origen does not refer to the Diatessaron; Eusebius evidently had not seen a copy (*Hist. Eccl.*, IV.xxix.6).

<sup>16</sup> Space unfortunately forbids further description of the very interesting finds—which include a synagogue and a church—in this commercial centre, destroyed by the Persians in AD 256 and since left uninhabited.

<sup>17</sup> *Studies and Documents III* (1935); but see P. Kahle, *The Cairo Geniza* (1947), pp.208ff.

<sup>18</sup> Particularly worth mentioning are the translation by T. H. Gaster, *The Scriptures of the Dead Sea Sect* (1957); Millar Burrows, *The Dead Sea Scrolls* (1956); H. H. Rowley, *The Zadokite Fragments and the Dead Sea Scrolls* (1952), and *The Dead Sea Scrolls and the New Testament* (1957).

<sup>19</sup> I have not discussed the vexed question of the date of the Scrolls. There is good reason to think that they fall between the Maccabean revolt (168 BC) and that of Bar Cochba (AD 132-5); further precision is not needed to demonstrate their relevance to New Testament studies.

<sup>20</sup> *Evangelium Veritatis* (1956), edited by M. Malinine, H. C. Puech, and G. Quispel. See also *The Jung Codex* (1955), by H. C. Puech, G. Quispel, and W. C. van Unnik, translated and edited by F. L. Cross. It is reported that a codex containing a collection of sayings of Jesus, from which the well-known Oxyrhynchus Logia appear to have been taken, has been published in photographic reproduction, but diligent inquiry has so far failed to produce a copy.

<sup>21</sup> *Adv. Haer.*, III.xi.9.

<sup>22</sup> The papyrus has been published by V. Martin (1956). It is known as P<sup>66</sup>.

<sup>23</sup> *Expository Times*, LXVIII (March 1957), pp.174-7.

<sup>24</sup> And the synoptic critic and the form-critic, who are concerned with the various ways in which the traditional gospel material crystallized in the first and second centuries.

## THE JOHANNINE LITERATURE

DURING THE last twenty-five years the Fourth Gospel has continued to hold a central place in New Testament studies. Of the great number of books which have been written about it, many have had an expository rather than a critical emphasis, but it is the critical, rather than the devotional, ones which have provoked most discussion. But in spite of them all we still have no sure answer to the questions when this Gospel was written, by whom, for whom, or where. Its relationship to the other gospels and the background from which it sprang still present unsolved problems.

Even within the last five years several books of outstanding importance have been published on this subject. There are two commentaries, one by R. H. Lightfoot and the other by C. K. Barrett. C. H. Dodd's book on *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*, though not a commentary, is a comprehensive exposition of the message of the Gospel. C. K. Barrett has also edited a revised edition of W. F. Howard's well-known book, first issued in 1931, *The Fourth Gospel in Recent Criticism and Interpretation*, and himself added two valuable chapters to cover the years between 1931 and 1955.

Somewhat earlier than these there appeared Hoskyns's important commentary, William Temple's two volumes of devotional meditations entitled *Readings in St John's Gospel*, and W. F. Howard's *Christianity according to St John*. Other books which dealt with specific problems related to the Gospel will be mentioned later.

One of the most original and stimulating of these was a small book called *St John and the Synoptic Gospels*, by Gardner-Smith, published in 1938. At that time it was commonly accepted as an established fact that the fourth evangelist knew and used the Gospels according to Mark and Luke, and possibly also Matthew. The grounds for affirming this were that certain phrases from Mark appear verbatim in John, and certain names appear only in Luke and John. Gardner-Smith emphasized how slight in fact these similarities were, compared with the much greater differences, claimed that they could be explained without assuming that the fourth evangelist knew the other three Gospels and argued that the Fourth Gospel was in fact written in complete independence of them. At first this little book seemed to make little impact on the world of scholarship, but increasingly the force of its arguments is being conceded. Dr Howard, for instance, in 1943 modified his earlier opinion and wrote: 'I am almost persuaded by the author's cumulative argument.' C. H. Dodd in 1953 also agreed that Gardner-Smith had shown 'how fragile were the arguments by which the dependence of John on the other gospels has been "proved"'. Dr Dodd himself has also examined four sayings of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel, parallel to sayings recorded also in the Synoptics, and has concluded that they reached John not through the Synoptics but 'through an independent channel'. In 1954 Bent Noack wrote *Zur Johanneischen Tradition*, in which he maintained that the Fourth Gospel is independent of all written sources, and is in fact the result of the writing down for the first time of an independent tradition which up to that time had been preserved orally. He argued that the emphasis on 'writing' in 21<sup>24-5</sup> suggests this. The Church where this independent tradition had been preserved must have been in some remote area,



unacquainted with the form of tradition known to us in the Synoptics.

If this assessment of the evidence can be accepted, it means that a much earlier date than that customarily assigned to the Gospel in recent years becomes possible, perhaps even necessary.

The possibility of an earlier date has also been raised on other grounds. At one time extreme scholars ascribed the origin of this Gospel to the second half of the second century, but manuscript evidence alone has proved this wrong. The fragment of papyrus known as the Rylands papyrus, which contains some verses from John 18, is dated by experts not later, and perhaps much earlier, than A.D. 150. The Egerton Papyrus, of about the same date, appears to be a composite narrative, derived in part from the Fourth Gospel. If we make allowance for the time it would take for the first manuscript to gain status sufficiently to be copied, to be taken to Egypt, there copied again, and perhaps used for some larger comprehensive gospel, we must accord a date well before A.D. 150 to the original writing.

A still further line of argument in favour of an early date comes from historical and archaeological investigations. W. F. Albright, whose scholarship lies primarily in these spheres, has concerned himself, however, with the date of this Gospel. He claims that many features of it, which in the past have been ascribed to the influence of Greek thought in some area far from Palestine, may be accounted for without assuming any influence other than those already known to have been active in Palestine in the first century. What are usually regarded as Greek models of thought and expression in the Fourth Gospel, and therefore derived from some late stage in the Gentile Mission, had in fact already established themselves within Judaism. This point of view has received some measure of confirmation from the Dead Sea Scrolls. These writings apparently were part of the library of a strict religious sect within Judaism in the early years of the first century A.D. Albright and others also claim that some of these writings reveal marked similarities in vocabulary and thought to that of the Fourth Gospel.

This evidence favouring an early date is, however, far from conclusive, but a date not later than A.D. 95 is probable, and an earlier date far from impossible.

An earlier date, presumably, would favour the traditional authorship of the Gospel, though this is not inconsistent with the date A.D. 95. Indeed Dr Temple strongly maintained it in his devotional studies of the Gospel. It would, however, be difficult to account for the strong tradition linking the book with Ephesus if indeed it was first written in Palestine. Albright avoids this difficulty by suggesting that the oral tradition behind John, so rich in local colour, took shape in Palestine, but was not actually put into writing till the author had moved away to some place in the Dispersion. On the whole, however, though recent studies support an earlier rather than a later date, they do not seem to have strengthened the claims for apostolic authorship. Such claims usually identify the Beloved Disciple with the Apostle John. This, however, faces the very real difficulty of believing that John referred to himself under this highly complimentary title. The verse 21<sub>24</sub> implies, even if the Beloved Disciple is John, that other people besides the apostle shared responsibility for the final production of the Gospel.

In recent years, what seems to the present writer a highly improbable hypothesis has been revived by J. N. Sanders. It is that the Beloved Disciple, on

whose authority the Gospel was published, is to be identified with Lazarus. The chief argument to support this is the fact that twice (in 11<sub>3.5</sub>) Lazarus is referred to as one whom Jesus loved. The other supporting arguments seem somewhat flimsy. Moreover this identification leaves us with the problem that the apostle John, so prominent in the Synoptics, receives no mention in this Gospel, except in the passing reference to the 'sons of Zebedee' in 21<sub>2</sub>. Most opinions still favour the view that the Beloved Disciple was John the Apostle, on whose testimony this Gospel depends, but that the actual author of the book in its present form is another, who revered John as the Disciple whom Jesus loved, and aimed at reproducing the substance of his message. If this second man also bore the common name John, that would account for many things.

Besides investigation into the relationship of John to the Synoptics, there has been close scrutiny of the Gospel to find out if earlier sources can be detected, interwoven into the fabric of the Gospel. Bultmann argued that there were two, a sayings source and a narrative source. One of these was of Gnostic rather than Christian origin, before it was adapted for Christian use. British scholars especially are unconvinced about these sources. Nor do they support Bultmann's vigorous plea for the influence of Mandaean literature upon the Fourth Gospel, mainly because the Mandaean writings did not exist in their present form until a much later date than that of the Gospel. C. H. Dodd has shown that close similarities exist between this Gospel and the Hermetic literature, but he explains these as due to a similarity of environment rather than any kind of literary dependence.

In 1931 it was customary to believe that the Gospel in the course of its transmission had suffered a number of dislocations. There were obvious inconsistencies in matters of geography and chronology, and it seemed the right and proper thing to make simple rearrangements in order to remove them. Some of these Moffatt even incorporated into his modern translation of the New Testament. But today scholars are not inclined to adopt this point of view. They argue that the author was aiming to present spiritual and theological truths, and that the plan and purpose of the Gospel is to be found in the developing theological theme of the Gospel. One of the author's least concerns was to preserve strict sequences of time and place. Both C. H. Dodd and C. K. Barrett believe that attempts to rearrange the Gospel spring from a misunderstanding of the author's purpose and method.

It is a well-known peculiarity of this Gospel that it includes no account of the baptism of Jesus, and none of the institution of the Sacrament of the Last Supper, although sacramental language is found in other contexts. It is curious that these features of the Gospel are interpreted very diversely. Bultmann sees in them a purposeful anti-sacramentalism, which aims at showing that the values often associated exclusively with the sacraments can indeed be found in Christ at all times, without the aid of sacrament. Cullmann, on the contrary, finds in this Gospel a profound sacramentalism. The omission of the account of the institution of the sacraments is due to reluctance to expose these sacred mysteries where common eyes may read about them. The sacramental references elsewhere in the Gospel would clearly be recognized as such by instructed Christians. Perhaps the truth is that the evangelist is fighting, as it were, on two fronts, seeking to counter those who were in danger of valuing the sacraments

in a magical way, and to correct those who were inclined to undervalue them.

Thirty years ago it was customary to ignore the Fourth Gospel as a source for actual historical facts about the life and death of Jesus. It is less so today. Not that many would be so bold as to claim that John was solidly historical, but it is probable that the author includes many references to times and places for no other reason than that he believed they were factually accurate. Such material may well include the placing of part of the ministry of Jesus in Judea, the tradition that Jesus met His first disciples in the circle of John the Baptist before He finally enlisted them as His own followers, and the dating of the Good Friday on which Jesus died as the day before the Passover and not the actual Passover Day (as the Synoptics, not without some ambiguity, maintain). If this last claim were true, it would mean that the Last Supper was not an actual Passover meal, but an informal fellowship meal in preparation for the Passover itself. Many scholars have strongly favoured the Johannine tradition at this point, but Jeremias in his book, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus*, has put forward a very strong defence of the Synoptic dating as against that of John.

Another interesting suggestion about the closing weeks in the life of Jesus is based on data drawn from John. Mark represents Jesus as entering Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, six days before His death on the Cross. Into these six days are packed a multitude of events and arguments. One has sometimes wondered how so much could be compressed into so short a time, and felt that a longer period was needed for the gathering hatred against Jesus to reach its dread climax. It may be that the Fourth Gospel gives the clue to this problem. It says in 7<sub>2, 10</sub> that Jesus left Galilee for Judea shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles in October, and remained in Jerusalem till the Feast of the Dedication in December (10<sub>22-3</sub>). Soon afterwards, however, He left Jerusalem and crossed to the east of the River Jordan (10<sub>40</sub>), and did not return to the city until six days before the Passover (12<sub>1</sub>). According to John, therefore, the last visit of Jesus to Jerusalem was divided into two periods, one from October to December, and the other for the six days before the Passover. It may well be that during the first period the hostility against Jesus grew more and more determined, till Jesus saw that His enemies intended His death. Since He was not yet ready to face this last crisis, 'his hour had not yet come', He withdrew to a quieter place, until He was ready to meet the frenzied hate of Pharisees and Sadducees at a time and place of His own choosing. This allows the space of about three months for all that Mark crowds into less than a week. Perhaps Mark knew of many events that had happened in Jerusalem, but was informed only of the last final entry six days before the death of Jesus. He was compelled therefore to compress all events recorded in Jerusalem into that short period. The French scholar, Goguel, seems to have been the first to suggest this reconstruction, based on information drawn from the Fourth Gospel, but Vincent Taylor, in *The Life and Ministry of Jesus*, has given it very sympathetic consideration.

Though it is generally conceded that the Fourth Gospel contains valuable historical data, slipped unobtrusively here and there into the narrative, we still await any attempt to deal thoroughly with the whole question of historicity in the Fourth Gospel. Did Jesus sometimes speak in long discourses, as in this Gospel? Did He really say, 'I am the Way, the Truth and the Life', even though the Synoptics record no similar saying? Did He really turn water into wine at

Cana, and bring out of the grave one who had lain dead for three days? Or should we be content to say that the Gospel is rather 'a dramatic presentation of theological ideas'? There are those who meet all such questions about historicity with the exasperating answer: 'That is the wrong kind of question to ask.' But it is asked, and it will continue to be asked, and what is to be the answer? C. H. Dodd whetted our appetite by touching on the matter in an appendix to his recent book, under the heading, 'Some considerations upon the Historical Aspect of the Fourth Gospel'. It raised the problems rather than answered them, but it made readers feel acutely the need of some frank, fearless, comprehensive and systematic treatment of the theme.

A review of Johannine Literature is inevitably concerned largely with the Gospel, but the Epistles must not be altogether left out. These Epistles were allocated, in the series of Moffatt Commentaries, to C. H. Dodd. One conclusion in his Introduction occasioned much surprise, because it was at variance with the general opinion. He argued that the writer of these Epistles was not the same person as the writer of the Gospel. This conclusion was based on careful linguistic tests, which showed that certain characteristic turns of phrase familiar in the Gospel did not occur at all in the Epistles. It provoked a vigorous and extensive reply from W. F. Howard in the *Journal of Theological Studies*. Dr Howard also based his arguments on linguistic tests and showed the very large degree of common idioms and usages in the Gospel and the Epistles. Both scholars made out a very strong case for their own thesis, but neither adequately answered the difficulties raised by the other, and to choose between their points of view is not easy. Whether or not the writer is the same man, there is no doubt that all these writings came from the same background and represent the same point of view.

The Apocalypse has received less attention. This may be because it is intrinsically less important than the others. Partly, however, it may be that the publication of R. H. Charles's two volumes of commentary in the I.C.C. in 1920 left very little further to be said at this present stage. It is true that in the early dark days of the war people turned to this strange book rather more than usual, as often seems to happen in times of distress and disaster. Usually our interest in the book is confined to a limited number of passages of exquisite beauty, but when the power of evil is triumphing and goodness and truth are downtrodden and men lose hope of seeing justice and righteousness vindicated here on this earthly scene, then it is that the undaunted faith of this defiant writer speaks to the trembling hearts of men, rousing in them hope and summoning them to courage. Perhaps this book is meant to be a stimulant for days of depression, to nerve the Christian to stern endurance in the face of grim ordeals. For our normal spiritual diet, however, for the Bread of Life by which we are nourished, and for the Water of Life by which we are refreshed for the normal duties of life, men still turn to the Epistles and above all to the Gospel. It is not only the testimony of Luther, but also that of a great host of humble believers that this Gospel—in spite of all the critical uncertainties surrounding it—is the greatest of all written treasures, that, among the books of the New Testament, at the head of all in spiritual value, stands this Gospel, 'the one nobly true Gospel, and the chief of them all'.

C. L. MITTON

## EASTER AND THE POETS

TO THE Christian the feast of Easter is the apex of the spiritual year, the first tremendous act in the drama of salvation. It is therefore to be expected that poets who profess the Christian faith should have written much upon the deathless themes of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of our Lord. What is more surprising is the number of agnostic poets who have written upon those tremendous events with profound insight and power. In spite of themselves men are deeply moved and imaginatively charged by the death of Christ. Many Easter poems need no introduction to the reader, they are part of our everyday heritage. I hope in this short article to draw attention to a few less-well-known poems and passages on the events and the significance of the Passion.

Leslie Norris, a contemporary Welsh poet and one who is not as widely known as he deserves to be, has written memorably of the Crucifixion in his *Poem in Eleven Parts*. He rightly sees in the first Good Friday a turning point in human history:

*This was the hooded hour of religion, a time  
To reckon from, to draw each trembling day's  
Account for this one. See the rigid cross  
Heave up a god into the light and tar a  
Heaven's blood across the terrible history of a martyr  
In each remembering second . . . This was the day  
The shuddering skies spurned contact with the world  
And all earth's seas poured from a widening wound  
To drown confusion and the root of evil.<sup>1</sup>*

That Christ's death was not merely a historical event but is still a living reality, that He still 'hangs upon his tree of stars' in waiting and redemptive love is a thought expressed by many poets. As Mr T. S. Eliot reminds us (in Number Six of his *Choruses from the Rock*):

*. . . the Son of Man was not crucified once for all,  
The blood of martyrs was not shed once for all,  
The lives of the saints not given once for all;  
But the Son of Man is crucified always  
And there shall be martyrs and saints.<sup>2</sup>*

It is a timely reminder of the everlasting need of sacrifice, not Christ's only but ours also, that the world may be redeemed.

One of the most remarkable, but also one of the most difficult sequences of poems on the themes of Easter is that by the late Dylan Thomas entitled *Ten Sonnets*. Powerful and highly original, these poems by a great religious (though not specifically Christian) poet cannot be sampled in extracts. A poem of his, not avowedly on the theme of the Resurrection, but one which I feel throws a wonderfully imaginative light upon the Christian belief in the victory of love is the lovely *And Death shall have no Dominion*:



*And death shall have no dominion.  
 Dead men naked they shall be one  
 With the man in the wind and the west moon;  
 When their bones are picked clean and the clean bones gone,  
 They shall have stars at elbow and foot;  
 Though they go mad they shall be sane,  
 Though they sink through the sea they shall rise again;  
 Though lovers be lost, love shall not;  
 And death shall have no dominion.<sup>3</sup>*

Alice Meynell, who was, of course, a Christian poet of great gifts, draws attention to the contrast between the scene of our Lord's death and that of His resurrection. In her poem, *Easter Night*, she wrote:

*Public was Death; but Power, but Might,  
 But Life again, but Victory,  
 Were hushed within the dead of night,  
 The shuttered dark, the secrecy.  
 And all alone, alone, alone,  
 He rose again behind the stone.<sup>4</sup>*

Few poets, and for that matter few other writers, have written of this obvious but not commonly remembered contrast. How simply, yet how effectively, Alice Meynell reveals that secret yet tremendous rising.

That other worlds, planets of distant stars, may also have had their Easters, their own versions of the Crucifixion and Resurrection of Christ is a strange, yet not illogical or even unlikely thought. Alice Meynell is the only poet who, to my knowledge, has treated of this theme. I quote two stanzas from her *Christ in the Universe*:

*With this ambiguous Earth  
 His dealings have been told us, these abide;  
 The signal to a maid, the human birth,  
 The lesson and the young man crucified.  
 But in the eternities  
 Doubtless we shall compare together, hear  
 A million alien Gospels, in what guise  
 He trod the Pleiades, the Lyre, the Bear.<sup>4</sup>*

That great Christian poet Gerard Manley Hopkins wrote little which is directly concerned with the events of Easter, but one splendid passage of his must be quoted. It is the concluding section of his great ode *That Nature is a Heraclitean Fire and the Comfort of the Resurrection*:

*Enough! the Resurrection,  
 A heart's clarion! Away grief's gasping, joyless days, dejection.  
 Across my foundering deck shone  
 A beacon, an eternal beam. Flesh fade, and mortal trash,  
 Fall to the residuary worm; world's wildfire, leave but ash:  
 In a flash, at a trumpet crash,*

*I am all at once what Christ is, since he was what I am, and  
This Jack, joke, poor potsherd, patch, matchwood, immortal diamond,  
Is immortal diamond.*<sup>5</sup>

Hopkins sees in Christ's passion the redemption not only of man but of nature also. The whole course of human and natural history is given for the poet a new and miraculous significance by God's mighty act on the Third Day.

Such then are a few, almost random, examples of the many and diverse poetic expressions of the events and the meaning of Easter. To treat the vast field of Easter poetry would require not a single article but several volumes, but this essay will have achieved its purpose if it draws attention to the great variety of this kind of poetry in our literature.

Perhaps I may be permitted to close with a sonnet of my own which attempts to sum up the central fact of the Passion, the timeless sacrifice of our Crucified Lord, whose face, once seen, can never be forgotten.

*Look on this face, this Crown of thorns, these hands  
Spiked to the bitter wood, blood from His side,  
Agony on His brow, then understand  
The Measure of His Care for us. Denied,  
He suffers still on His Celestial Tree,  
Leaning in love down from the sphere of heaven,  
Rejoicing where the faithful two or three  
Gather together in His name, are leaven  
In this world's bitter bread. Look then and learn  
God's pursuant Love, His timeless Care that waits  
The revolution of penitence. We spurn,  
But He is merciful, compassionate.  
Look on this face, this crown of thorns, this Cross,  
And learn the priceless gain of this dear loss.*<sup>6</sup>

FREDERIC VANSON

<sup>1</sup> *Poem in Eleven Parts*, by Leslie Norris, is from his book, *Poems* (Resurgam Press).

<sup>2</sup> *Choruses from the Rock* is in Mr T. S. Eliot's *Collected Poems* (Faber).

<sup>3</sup> *And Death shall have no Dominion* is from *Collected Poems of Dylan Thomas* (J. M. Dent).

<sup>4</sup> The poems by Alice Meynell are from *Poems of Alice Meynell* (Oxford University Press).

<sup>5</sup> The poem by Gerard Manley Hopkins is from the same publisher's edition of that poet's works.

<sup>6</sup> The final sonnet is from *Holy Sonnets* by Frederic Vanson (privately published).

## ISRAEL'S TENTH ANNIVERSARY

THIS year Jews in Israel and throughout the world are celebrating the tenth anniversary of the Proclamation which brought into being the State of Israel as we know it. While the occasion for the celebration is understandable enough the dating seems a little odd. The original proclamation was issued on 14th May 1948. Its anniversary falls this year on 25th April.

And why? The answer is simple enough. The Proclamation bore two dates: one of general, the other of particular application. The general one, of course, was 14th May 1948. The particular was the Hebrew date, the fifth day of the second month (Iyar) of the year 5708, which in accordance with the Jewish tradition, is reckoned from the creation of the world.

This use of a Hebrew date at once focuses attention on that sense of historical continuity which has always been such a remarkable characteristic of Jewish thought and outlook. When he refers to 'father Abraham' the Jew is using more than a figure of speech; he is recalling an historic fact.

There is, of course, a very real sense in which the State set up in 1948 is new. There is another in which, for many Jews today, it is as old as the day in which, 'with a mighty hand and outstretched arm', the Lord brought up the Children of Israel out of the land of Egypt to lead them to the Promised Land. Moreover, the State which was finally overthrown by Hadrian in the year A.D. 135 has never really ceased to exist in the heart of the generations of Israel from that day to this.

Nor is that all. For the roots of this sense of historical continuity are essentially theological. History for the Jew is more than a mere sequence of events. It is the sphere of the Divine operation in which the real meaning of events is to be understood only in relation to the nature and purpose of God as these are revealed in the Torah and expounded in the tradition of the Elders.

Thus, Rabbi Solomon Goren, the Senior Chaplain to Israel's Defence Forces, in a recent article on 'Israel's Place in the Messianic Pattern', suggests that: 'the establishment of the State of Israel has posed the fundamental question of its place in the eschatological redemption of Israel as envisaged in the Bible. The question to be determined is whether the State is a basic stage in the realization of the Messianic vision.' 'Are we justified', he asks, 'in regarding events attending its creation, such as the victory against seven Arab nations and the liberation of the country, the establishment of a sovereign government, and the beginning of the ingathering of the Exiles, as indicating at long last the prophetic fulfilment? Or are they only major events in an unfolding Jewish history which, while constituting a turning-point in the national life of the people—or at least that part which has returned to the Homeland—nevertheless do not contain any Messianic overtones?'

The dangers of over-simplification and misinterpretation inherent in such an approach to the assessment of contemporary historical events are obvious. Awareness of the danger, however, is no excuse for seeking to evade the fundamental issues. For the religious Jew these are real questions. But so are they also for the Christian who has inherited from Judaism a view of history which constitutes a significant area of the common ground between himself and his Jewish neighbour.

Failure to recognize the full significance of this led to an embarrassing situation at the Second Assembly of the World Council of Churches at Evanston in 1954. There a proposal to write into the Assembly's Message a reference to the relation of Israel to the Christian hope provoked immediate and irreconcilable opposition both from the Middle East and from the Middle West. From the Middle West a distinguished American layman, interpreting the term 'Israel' in a religious and universal sense, argued that to refer to Jews in this context could only cause embarrassment to himself and to some of his Jewish friends, who, he declared, had a perfectly good religion of their own. The protest from the Middle East came from Christians to whom the term 'Israel' had only a political and very localized connotation.

A directive to the Central Committee of the World Council to arrange for a special study of the problem provided a temporary easement of the situation. A Consultation took place at the Ecumenical Institute in September 1956, the report of which was published in the following April. This report, though in different terms, asks very much the same questions as Rabbi Goren's article. 'We must ask', it says, 'whether the centuries' long preservation of the Jews as an ethnic as well as a religious group, recently altered partially, but drastically, with what future we cannot say, is not intended by God to teach both us and them new lessons concerning the problems of race and nationality, which so gravely vex the world in which we live.'

It seems clear, therefore, that while the celebration of the tenth anniversary of Israel's Day of Independence is an event of international interest and importance, it constitutes a particular challenge to the Christian. It is a challenge first to reconsider, in the light of this Judaeo-Christian concept of history, the factors which led to the establishment of the Jewish State. Secondly, it is a challenge to a new assessment of what is happening in Israel today.

It is, of course, a relatively simple matter to explain the origin of the State and to assess its consequences in purely political terms. On 26th September 1947 the British Government informed the United Nations Special Committee on Palestine that unless some solution of the Palestine problem acceptable to both Arabs and Jews were forthcoming she would surrender the Mandate for Palestine entrusted to her by the League of Nations in May 1922. No such solution was forthcoming, nor was any provision made for the administration of the country after the British withdrawal, which was eventually fixed for 14th May. Someone had to do something. The Proclamation of Independence was issued, and at dawn on 15th May the armies of the surrounding Arab States advanced against the newly-born Jewish State.

The tragic consequences of the conflict are still very much with us. The first was the Arab refugee problem which differs from almost all other refugee problems both in the degree of the misery incurred by so many of its victims and in the extent to which this human tragedy has been exploited for political ends. Secondly, the state of political and economic deadlock between Israel and her neighbours has been seriously aggravated by frequent border incidents and one large-scale military operation, the Sinai campaign of November 1956. Finally, though the Arab-Israel conflict is by no means the only nor even the major problem of the Middle East, it has been exploited more successfully than any other in the heightening of tension both in the Middle East and throughout the entire world.

But this is really only the beginning of the story. The further back we go in the search for causes the further we are driven. It is clearly impossible to ignore the impact on the Middle East of the Nazi extermination of 5,000,000 Jews in Europe. But neither can we ignore the pogroms of the late nineteenth century in Eastern Europe which transformed a centuries old dream of the return from the Exile into the political reality of the Zionist Organization. And so back through the period of politically motivated persecution to the centuries of conflict between the Church and the Synagogue. It was during this period that intolerant attitudes and frequently shameful conduct conspired to produce on the one hand the social, economic and politically abnormal conditions under which successive generations of Jews were forced to live, and on the other that caricature of 'the Jew!' which persists to this very day in the minds of so many Christians. The story is one which, when he comes to know it, no Christian can contemplate without shame nor without recognizing the extent to which many of the causes which in our own day have led to the emergence of the State of Israel are rooted in the Christian failures of the past.

But if there is ground for heart-searching and penitence in the past, there is also much to stimulate and encourage in what is happening in Israel today, particularly in the religious, educational and cultural spheres.

I have already quoted an article by a distinguished Rabbi. Equally significant was a book published in Jerusalem only a year or two ago under the title, *The Modern Jew faces Eternal Problems*. Though its author, Dr Aron Barth, was an internationally famous commercial lawyer and economist, who until his death a few months ago was General Manager of the National Bank of Israel, the problems to which he addressed himself were essentially religious. His basic concern was 'whether Judaism, not *any* Judaism—conservative, liberal or reform—but *the* Judaism, the traditional Judaism that derives from the written and oral Law, can provide the Jews of the twentieth century with an accepted, uniform *Weltanschauung*. 'There is no contradiction', he wrote, 'between universalism and nationalism. And there are no differences of opinion in this respect in the Books of the Bible and in the sayings of the sages. Universalism is the point of departure and the ultimate goal. But nationalism is the road leading from one to the other.'

But if these are questions for the modern Jew they concern the Christian also. And that not merely in relation to Israel. For these are among the most important issues with which Christians too must wrestle as they face the challenge of this modern world to a closer integration of what we have come so readily to accept as the seeming opposites of religion and politics, religion and science, Church and State, and nationalism and internationalism.

There are, of course, many people today who, like Professor Toynbee, look upon Judaism as little better than an effete and outworn survival of an age long past. For them the State of Israel, apart from the political and economic features it shares with many other recently created national states, has no more interest than a fossil. For those who have eyes to see, however, the things that happen there are full of life and interest.

Certainly those who drew up the Proclamation of Independence did not hesitate to set themselves a high ideal. 'The State of Israel', they declared, 'will be open to immigration of Jews from all countries of their dispersion; will



promote the development of the country for the benefit of all its inhabitants; will be based on the principles of liberty, justice and peace as conceived by the Prophets of Israel; will uphold the full social and political equality of all its citizens, without distinction of religion, race or sex; will guarantee freedom of religion, conscience, education and culture; will safeguard the Holy Places of all religions; and will loyally uphold the principles of the United Nations Charter.'

Twice during the past ten years I have had the good fortune to visit Israel to see something of the way its people are responding to this challenge. The policy of the open door, without precedent or parallel in the modern world, has resulted in the building up of a population which in itself is sufficient to test the Declaration at every single point.

Take the civil and religious rights of minorities, for example. Of a total population of nearly 1,900,000 some 12 per cent. are non-Jews. These are mainly Arabs, the majority of whom are Moslems, with small minorities of Christians and Druzes. From the outset the State has adopted a policy of complete religious toleration towards non-Jews, though this has not always been easy, particularly at the administrative level when questions of permission for missionaries and missionary societies to operate in the country have been under consideration. In the matter of civil liberties there have been greater difficulties. The presence of a considerable Arab minority in areas where it has been virtually impossible to prevent either contact with or influence by Arabs across the frontier constituted a security risk which necessitated the setting up of a military government and the imposition of certain restrictions which had the effect of reducing the Arab to the status of a second-class citizen.

Even so there has been constant pressure on the part of increasing numbers of Jewish citizens of the country for the relaxing of the restrictions and the ending of military government. In the meantime in many instances the friendliest of relations have developed between Jews and Arabs in neighbouring villages, as well as in senior schools and in the University, where Arab and Jewish students work together in amity and understanding.

Interestingly enough, some of the most difficult problems have arisen not between Jews and Arabs but between Jews and Jews. One of the most remarkable features of the immigration that has taken place since 14th May 1948 is that only 31.5 per cent. of the immigrants have come from Europe and America. The remaining 68.5 per cent. have all come from Asia and Africa, many of them from exceedingly primitive conditions. I had hardly set foot on Israel soil on my first visit in May 1951 before an official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs told me of a concern that many already felt as to whether, in the State which some had taken for granted would become a spearhead of Western culture in the Middle East, Western or Oriental influences would predominate. Or would some new pattern emerge?

Though the problem still remains, it was clear by the time of my second visit, five years later, that great progress had been made in the integration of these many different types of Jews. In one respect, however, there is little sign as yet of any outstanding progress. This is in the field of specifically Jewish religious affairs. Here an orthodox minority still enjoys an influence altogether out of proportion to its numerical strength. This is due partly to the fact that in a Parliament elected on a basis of proportional representation, and virtually demanding

a coalition government, the orthodox religious party is able at times to exercise a controlling influence. More significant is the fact that it is as yet too early for a generation of leaders to have emerged capable of tackling the inevitably complex and difficult task of distinguishing between time-honoured traditions and observances and the underlying principles they were designed in the first instance to conserve.

This, however, is certain: there is increasing awareness in the country as a whole of the urgency and inescapability of these problems, underlying all of which is the fundamental question of authority—a problem as pressing in Christian as it is in Jewish circles, not only in Israel, but throughout the world.

It is considerations such as these which make this tenth anniversary of the establishment of the State of Israel an event of such interest and importance for Christian as well as Jews. Let me underline one point in conclusion. Just as it would be unreasonable to expect that all the questions inherent in so complex a situation, to say nothing of the answers, should have emerged in so short a space of time, so it would be quite impossible in an article of this length to mention, let alone deal adequately with, the many and varied factors that make the State of Israel so important in the present world situation. The Christian, who cannot absolve himself from some share in the responsibility for the complex chain of causes which have brought the State into being, will do well to give the most careful attention to this new confrontation with issues that are as timeless as they are universal.

W. W. SIMPSON

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## THE HOLY FAMILY AT CAPERNAUM

IT is a passage in the Fourth Gospel which associates the parents of our Lord intimately with Capernaum. It was in that city the people cried: 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?'<sup>1</sup>

The question whether Joseph and Mary eventually removed their home to Capernaum has more than once been discussed, but it is proposed here to approach the matter from a very remote angle. Two considerations are relevant about which we have not the firm data we might wish—the age of Jesus when He commenced His ministry, and the age at which He met His death. St Luke states, in presenting a genealogy, that Jesus began His ministry when He was

'about thirty years of age'.<sup>2</sup> The age is professedly approximate. Moreover, in the phrase 'when he began to teach' the words 'to teach' are supplied in translation, and 'when he began' are absent from one important MS., the Sinaitic Syriac.<sup>3</sup> The evidence for omission is not strong, but, if we accept the shorter reading, the passage reads quite naturally: 'And Jesus himself was about thirty years of age, being the son of . . .'. Moreover, with the first historical account of our Lord's ministry, St Luke shows that our Lord is already famous. A most successful tour in Galilee has been accomplished, where 'He taught in their synagogues, being glorified of all'.<sup>4</sup> Such fame must have taken time to grow. It spread as far as Nazareth, where Jesus, according to St Luke, pays a visit immediately.<sup>5</sup>

This successful tour, of which we have so little detail, may well have been associated with Capernaum as its centre, the place mentioned in the address at Nazareth, since Matthew, at the close of his record of the Temptation, says that Jesus 'came and dwelt in Capernaum', having left Nazareth.<sup>6</sup> It is possible therefore to extend the period of our Lord's ministry backward, so to speak. It has been suggested, of course, that the age of about thirty is appropriate to the beginning of the ministry, since it was traditionally the age when public ministry and service could be assumed.<sup>7</sup> The case of John the Baptist, however, cannot have come under this convention, for when he is within a few months of our Lord's age, according to Luke's own testimony, the Baptist is already a figure of great religious eminence, with considerable public following, an established régime and disciples, granting audition to notables from Jerusalem.<sup>8</sup> Nor did the limitation apply to Josephus, for we are told that he was consulted for his proficiency in the Law by notables of Jerusalem when he was only fourteen years of age, that he was pupil of Banus the hermit, for three years before he was nineteen, and that at that age he became formally a Pharisee. It seems that our Lord need not have delayed His public ministry merely on account of age.

Reasons may be given also for presuming that Jesus did not remain in Nazareth for so long as thirty years. There is no indication that the family is in residence in Luke's account of our Lord's visit there; we have only the ejaculation of the folk, 'Is not this Joseph's son?' The later accounts of Mark and Matthew differ or expand this a little, but there is still no indication that the family is present or residing there, with this singular exception: 'are not his sisters here with us?' (Mark) or 'his sisters, are they not all with us?' (Matthew).<sup>9</sup> It is open to suppose the sisters either present at the time or resident in Nazareth. But the saying that the sisters are 'with us' surely means 'in constant intercourse with us'.<sup>10</sup> One writer assumes that the sisters had married and settled there.<sup>11</sup>

There is another reason why it may not be necessary to conclude that Jesus remained in Nazareth longer than mere boyhood. In fairness to the folk there it may be said that our Lord cannot have achieved any spiritual status as an adult in association with their synagogue, for when He addresses the company their surprise seems quite natural and human, even if their conduct is infamous. Had He left His home so late in life as about thirty, would He not have left some reputation of spiritual culture and quality? If not, and Luke's story of our Lord's unique spiritual consciousness in the Temple at the age of twelve is to be respected, that early promise had been much delayed.

The extent of the opportunity for spiritual culture and service which Nazareth could offer for thirty years is also relevant. The best of both possible worlds has been made for the place, as at one and the same time open and accessible, and yet sufficiently remote from the main stream of traffic and affairs to be secluded. But Nazareth might hardly offer capable and accessible teachers under whom a young man could study to become what Jesus undoubtedly was, an expert in Jewish Law; it has been said that no notable Rabbi is reputed to have been associated with the place.<sup>12</sup> Jesus could hardly emerge from Nazareth at about thirty years of age with the equipment and capacity supremely displayed at the first record of His ministry in the Gospel.

What positive evidence may we be said to have that Jesus came to be resident (with the rest of the family except the sisters) in Capernaum? It is sometimes suggested that He resided with Simon Peter and Andrew. The story of how our Lord healed 'Simon's wife's mother' is told in the three Synoptic Gospels, and it has been presumed that the sense in which, after her recovery, Simon's mother-in-law 'ministered unto them'<sup>13</sup> was that Jesus remained with the two brothers under her domestic management throughout His ministry. But the theory that Jesus came to be a permanent guest in Peter's home, based upon the evidence of the phrase quoted, is very insecure. Indeed, it seems only possible if we accept as the length of His ministry the very shortest time allowed by extreme critics.<sup>14</sup> A residence of a year, and certainly one of three years, would seem too long for our Lord's independent habit, and the directions He gave to His missionaries do not suggest that He encouraged them to quarter themselves indefinitely upon their hosts. ('The Teaching of the Twelve Apostles' directs that an apostle 'shall stay one day, and if need be the next also, but if he stay three, he is a false prophet'.<sup>15</sup>) The passage in the Fourth Gospel which so intimately associates Jesus with Capernaum is most significant in that it is in this city—not Nazareth, with which the Synoptics associate almost the same words—that the inhabitants claim to know His family. Has the writer of the Fourth Gospel made a mistake? Is there any evidence to show that the family came to Capernaum in the boyhood of Jesus?

The apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew represents Joseph as plying his trade at certain intervals in Capernaum, frequently leaving his home in Nazareth till he eventually settles in the larger city with his family.<sup>16</sup> The testimony from the apocryphal Gospel may be an inference from the four Gospels similar to that which is proposed here, but it could be based directly upon Matthew's statement at the conclusion of the story of the Temptation, that Jesus, 'leaving Nazareth (he) came and dwelt in Capernaum'. The first Gospel certainly uses a word which indicates a permanent settlement in a place.<sup>17</sup> That the same Gospel calls Capernaum 'his own city'<sup>18</sup> must support this inference. The Fourth Gospel relates how Jesus went from Cana to Capernaum 'with his mother, his brethren and his disciples' and 'there they abode not many days'.<sup>19</sup> But this need not mean that Capernaum was a mere port of call. It may mean that they went 'home'. The fishermen disciples lived in Capernaum—in the fishers' quarter, Bethsaida—and 'the Passover of the Jews was at hand'. Luke tells us that the mother of Jesus went up to the Passover every year;<sup>20</sup> but the others must have been involved in the same assignment, and we may presume they all went from Capernaum to the Passover, as from home, after a short interval.

In an incident in the Fourth Gospel,<sup>21</sup> our Lord's brothers suggest to Jesus that He should go up to the Feast of Tabernacles 'openly'. In the same context we are told that Jesus 'walked in Galilee', and in the previous chapter He is in Capernaum and is definitely associated with the place, together with His father and mother. Is it to be supposed, therefore, that amid occasions of teaching in and about the synagogue at Capernaum Jesus has found time to visit Nazareth, twenty miles or so away? Or have the brothers come that distance, surely out of their way, going up to the Feast at Jerusalem? Rather, does it not appear from this and other incidents of the same order that the brothers are close at hand, probably in the family home at Capernaum? The sisters, it may be remarked, are again not mentioned. They are out of the way of these controversies.

The synoptic tradition<sup>22</sup> records the occasion when Jesus' 'mother and brethren came: and standing without sent to him and called him'. There are reasons to suppose this scene takes place in Capernaum. Earlier in the chapter Jesus has elsewhere called and appointed the Twelve, as Mark says, 'that they might be with him'. It is probably under the influence of this statement that there is MS. reading (A.V.) '*they* come into a house'—or 'home'. The R.V. has 'he' comes 'home'. This last word is in the margin. In the R.S.V. it is in the text. But some of the disciples appear to have lived in Capernaum—namely, the fishermen—and these may have been with Jesus when He returned. The crowd has gathered 'so that *they* could not so much as eat bread'. It is hardly to be presumed that '*they*' refers to the crowd, as though they might be likely to sit down there and then, in the streets, to take their food. Jesus and His friends are hindered from access to their homes and the necessary meal, and it is in the general commotion that 'friends' go out 'to lay hold upon' Jesus because they fear He is distraught. The translation 'friends'<sup>23</sup> which is in the Versions is disputed, and it has been suggested that we should read 'relatives', but there are valid reasons for the rendering in the Versions. The Greek phrase is not exactly definitive, and it might mean relatives, but it is chiefly used for persons more remote. These friends may reasonably be supposed to be friends and neighbours living about Jesus in 'his own city'—Capernaum. The account of the mother of Jesus and His brothers standing 'outside' (outside their own home?), calling Him, follows later.

It is between the account of the friends' concern for our Lord's exalted mood and the appearance of the mother and the brothers that Mark has seen fit to introduce the Beelzebub controversy.<sup>24</sup> But this appears elsewhere in the Gospels in very different contexts. The narration in Mark knits up quite naturally without it, and its introduction at this particular point has turned a local confusion into an occasion of rather different proportions. Our Lord's mother and brethren may not have come all the way from Nazareth; they are harassed by the crowd, as our Lord and His party also have been harassed, round about their own homes. There is no serious charge of madness, but Jesus, in the centre of this confusion, is a serious concern to all.

It is a moot point whether, when Jesus calls Levi<sup>25</sup> from his Customs post—surely in Capernaum—He entertains Levi at His home or is entertained by Levi at his. Mark and Matthew can be understood as supposing the meal to take place at the home of our Lord. 'Many publicans and sinners sat down with Jesus and his disciples', says the record. And if Matthew regarded Capernaum



as our Lord's 'own city', he would have no difficulty in presuming it was our Lord's home.<sup>26</sup> From Mary's point of view, not to mention others of the family, these invasions of 'publicans and sinners' might be more than either religious scruple or domestic arrangement could appreciate.

The Fourth Gospel says that the brothers of Jesus 'did not believe on him'.<sup>27</sup> This certainly does not mean that they were irreligious. They attended the Jewish ordinances, but they probably resented the continual disturbance of family affairs and the inordinate activity of their brother, who was to so great an extent aloof from family responsibility, and was certainly religiously unorthodox. Dr Brandon<sup>28</sup> seems to accept the fact that James became reconciled to Jesus before the Crucifixion, and James soon came to be leader of the early Church, holding also a high reputation among his compatriots. The family was united eventually in what has been called 'the first Christian congregation',<sup>29</sup> and an Epistle in the Canon is associated with Jude. The rift in the family cannot have been so tragic or irremediable. The fact is that members of the family are far more likely to have yielded to the influence of our Lord if they lived closely together in Capernaum than remotely away in Nazareth.

It is not extravagant to suppose that the lake-side city became the residence of Joseph. He was a worker in wood (*Τέκτων*) and the packing of salted fish, which went far afield, even boat-building, as well as the more usual activities of the trade, would attract and occupy him. The supposition would account for our Lord's intimate acquaintance with that little world's cultural and commercial activity. His knowledge of practical affairs, banking, building, the temper of workpeople, their political aspirations, the ways of Galilean grandees and the notions of notable legalists; Jesus probably did not meet the seeker of goodly pearls, for example, in Nazareth. It is also without doubt that He became an expert in the Jewish Law; for if He had not been, the authorities would not have wasted their time and wits upon Him. All this seems to require a very early background of residence in a greater and busier city than His boyhood's home. One of the words from the cross also gains in significance if we accept this supposition, for if Capernaum had become the home of His parents, it was most natural that Jesus should commit His mother to the care of John, seeing that he would be neighbour as well as the best beloved.<sup>30</sup>

Other indications that the Evangelists speak naturally of a residence for our Lord in Capernaum may be indicated. Matthew's chapter of parables follows directly upon his account, referred to above, of the mother and brother of Jesus standing 'without' looking for Him; and Matthew then proceeds significantly, 'on that day went Jesus out of the house and sat by the seaside'.<sup>31</sup> Later in the sequence of parables, He 'left the multitude and went into the house';<sup>32</sup> this was to interpret. In Mark we are told that another parable was explained 'when he was entered into the house from the multitude'.<sup>33</sup> It is certainly at Capernaum that the disciples confess they have been arguing about 'who should be the greatest';<sup>34</sup> and this also was 'when he was in the house'. With regard to another story, told only by Matthew,<sup>35</sup> it is interesting to speculate whether the tax officers would have required the tribute from our Lord (Peter's liability we can well understand) unless He had lived in the ordinary way in Capernaum; Jesus and Peter enter 'into the house' to discuss this. In some of these references the house may have been Peter's, but in some of them surely it must have been our

Lord's. It could hardly have been Peter's every time and all the time. Moreover there must have been some delicacy about invading anybody's house in spite of Eastern freedom. Further afield would be another matter; friends like those at Bethany would entertain Jesus, and a room seems to have been at His disposal in Jerusalem—'my guest-chamber'<sup>36</sup> He calls it.

A further consideration is the fact that a number of the disciples were fishermen. It may be that Jesus called these men because of the splendid qualities of those who follow this adventurous calling, but it may have been also because they were His own neighbours when He came to live in their city, and that they were in association with the synagogue in Capernaum as He was Himself.

Do these things account for the poignancy of our Lord's sorrowful condemnation of the cities about the Lake? In the severest condemnation of all, uttered upon the high-sited and high-minded city of Capernaum,<sup>37</sup> can we discern the pangs of unrequited love for the place which may have been 'home' to Him? If it was His home in that sense, then granting Mark's intimate association with Peter, and Peter's outstanding rôle in the early Church, could it possibly have escaped all notice and record that Jesus lived with Peter throughout all His ministry? Since it is also conceivable that our Lord's span of life, as well as His public ministry, may be assessed more generously than has been hitherto our usual reckoning, this question of His 'home' is profoundly interesting and relevant.

R. SCOTT FRAYN

<sup>1</sup> John 6<sub>42</sub>.

<sup>3</sup> Omitted by 124, e f mt syrsin pesch (Huck, *Synopse*).

<sup>5</sup> Luke 4<sub>23</sub>.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Numbers 4<sub>3</sub>.

<sup>9</sup> Mark 6<sub>3</sub>; Matthew 13<sub>56</sub>.

<sup>11</sup> Klausner, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Eng. trans., p.234.

<sup>12</sup> Edersheim, *Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I.233.

<sup>13</sup> Mark 1<sub>29ff.</sub>; cf. verse 31.

<sup>14</sup> Professor Ch. Guignebert allows three or four months! (*Jesus*. Trans. Hooke, p.211.)

<sup>15</sup> XI.5 (trans. Bigg).

<sup>16</sup> Fourth or fifth century, said to be a translation of Jerome's in Latin, probably based upon a composite work of the second century. An abstract of this apocryphal Gospel may be found in M. R. James, *The Apocryphal New Testament* (Oxford).

<sup>17</sup> Greek, *κατοικέω*.

<sup>20</sup> Luke 2<sub>41</sub>.

<sup>22</sup> This and the next paragraph concerns Mark 3<sub>19,31</sub> and intervening text.

<sup>23</sup> Greek, *οι παρ' αὐτοῦ*.

<sup>24</sup> Verses 22-30.

<sup>25</sup> Luke 5<sub>27ff.</sub> and parallels.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Gould (*Commentary on Mark*, I.C.C.), quoting Meyer, Holtzmann, and others. See also Allen, p.90, taking this view (*Commentary on Matthew*, I.C.C.).

<sup>27</sup> John 7<sub>5</sub>.

<sup>29</sup> Acts 1<sub>33ff.</sub>

<sup>32</sup> Verse 36.

<sup>35</sup> Matthew 17<sub>24,26</sub>.

<sup>2</sup> Luke 3<sub>23</sub>.

<sup>4</sup> Luke 4<sub>14</sub>, 15.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew 4<sub>13</sub>.

<sup>8</sup> John 1; cf. verse 19.

<sup>10</sup> Greek, *Πρὸς ἡμᾶς*.

<sup>18</sup> Matthew 9<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>21</sup> John 7<sub>2ff.</sub>

<sup>19</sup> John 2<sub>12</sub>.

<sup>28</sup> *The Christians and the Fall of Jerusalem*, p.50.

<sup>30</sup> John 19<sub>26</sub>.

<sup>33</sup> Mark 7<sub>17</sub>.

<sup>36</sup> Mark 14<sub>14</sub>; Luke 22<sub>11</sub>.

<sup>31</sup> Matthew 13<sub>1</sub>.

<sup>34</sup> Mark 9<sub>33</sub>.

<sup>37</sup> Matthew 11<sub>20ff.</sub>

## JABEZ BUNTING, D.D.

13th May, 1779—16th June, 1858

ON FRIDAY, 30th March 1781, John Wesley opened the new chapel in Oldham Street, Manchester, and continued there four days, ministering to crowded and enthusiastic congregations. It was probably at that time that a young woman brought her little son, not quite two years of age, to receive the venerable man's blessing. Years before, as Mary Redfern, she had heard a sermon by Richard Boardman, one of Wesley's preachers, on 1 Chronicles 4, : *And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren.* So deeply was she impressed that, when her first and only son was born ten years later, Mary Bunting, as she had become by marriage, called him *Jabez* and dedicated him to the Lord.

Cradled and nurtured in Methodism, he was destined to become the most outstanding figure in its ministry since Wesley himself. His father was a tailor who sent him to one of the best schools in Manchester. There he formed an intimate friendship with a son of Dr Percival, a man eminent in his profession and a leading citizen. After schooldays, Jabez became secretary and apprentice to the doctor and lived with the family, whose members took him to their hearts. It was an important formative period in his life. The highly cultural atmosphere of his surroundings helped him to acquire those graces of bearing and diction which distinguished him in later life. He proved to be an apt pupil, with the prospect of becoming the doctor's partner and in due course his successor in a lucrative practice, but it was not to be. God had other plans for Jabez Bunting.

He became a member of the Methodist Society in what was probably a unique way. While in his 'teens he had an experience which would have daunted many young people. Under the ministry of the Rev. Joseph Benson, to whom he attributed his spiritual awakening, he had been allowed to accompany his mother to the Quarterly Lovefeast, in contravention of the rule which limited the privilege to members of Society. When Alexander Mather, who was a strict observer of Methodist discipline, followed Benson, he enforced the rule, and young Bunting was excluded. Instead of showing hot resentment he pondered the situation, dedicated his life to his Lord and, at the age of fifteen, joined the Methodist Society. In later years he used to remark: 'Many attribute their conversion to their having attended a lovefeast. I attribute mine to being shut out from one.'

Immediately he took an active interest in Christian work, particularly among young men, for whom he founded a *Society for the Acquirement of Religious Knowledge*. In 1798 he became a local preacher and very soon thereafter was urged to offer for the ministry. His father having died in 1797, leaving the family penniless, his mother and two sisters were wholly dependent upon him for support. The difficulty of such responsibility would be greatly increased were he to renounce the financial prospects of a medical man for the meagre stipend of a Methodist minister. He set forth in writing and at great length the arguments for and against, but finally, with the approval of his family and friends, consented to be nominated for the itinerancy. At the Conference of 1799, held on his home ground, Oldham Street Chapel, Manchester, he was

received 'on trial' and appointed to the Oldham Circuit, where he remained two years. From the outset he resolved to leave his appointments entirely to Conference decision and to remain in no circuit beyond two years.

With the details of Bunting's circuit life we must not be concerned. Suffice it to say that he was immediately recognized as a man of outstanding ability, and many were the requests for his services. In 1801 he proceeded to Macclesfield, where he met his wife, and in 1803 to London as the junior minister. There he was brought into intimate association with the leading ministers of the Connexion, who recognized his talents and made use of them. Life as a circuit minister in London was itself sufficiently strenuous, but he also became a kind of general factotum to all the Connexional departments, especially the Missionary Society and the Bookroom. Arduous as this extra work was, he was largely recompensed by the valuable knowledge thus gained of the working of the Connexional machine.

In 1805 he left London and for the next ten years travelled entirely in the north of England, staying two years in each circuit: Manchester, Sheffield, Liverpool and, in 1811, Halifax, where he was the Superintendent of an important circuit and Chairman of one of the largest Districts of Methodism, at the age of thirty-two and when of only twelve years' standing in the ministry. Two years in Leeds followed, and in 1815 he returned to London, where he continued as a circuit minister for six years.

During all those years in the north he had been establishing his position of supremacy in the Conference and the Connexion, not of set purpose, but by virtue of his outstanding qualities. His brethren called him to some of the most responsible positions. He was appointed to the Secretaryship of the Conference on ten separate occasions, the first being in 1814, but for some years he had carried out the duties of the office for Dr Coke. Bunting was first elected to the Chair at the Liverpool Conference of 1820, after twenty-one years in the ministry, and at three successive periods of eight years he returned to it: in 1828, 1836, and 1844.

Few committees were regarded as complete without him. From 1821 to 1824 he was both Secretary to the Missionary Society and Connexional Editor, reverting to the former office in 1835 and holding it twenty years in all. His passion for missionary work was lifelong and he was in constant demand for the great rallies that were held throughout the Connexion. In 1834, whilst still at the Missionary Society, he was appointed as President of the newly-formed Theological Institution.

The all-commanding passion of Bunting's life was his love for Methodism, and he aimed unceasingly at establishing her as a recognized communion of the Christian Church, strong in her own divine right and subservient to neither the Establishment nor Dissent. He took a leading and often initiatory part in any modification of or addition to the constitution that would further that end. Among the reforms for which he was largely responsible were the acquisition of Woodhouse Grove as a school, the reorganization of the Missionary Society, the election of laymen to Conference committees, and the ordination of ministers by the imposition of hands.

But one of his chief concerns was to clarify the position of the preachers and to establish their status as true ministers of Jesus Christ, called by Him through

the Church and thereby invested with pastoral, teaching, and administrative responsibilities. The superintendent ministers, in particular, must be regarded, within the limits of their circuits, as representative of and responsible to the Conference, and, as such, be under obligation to enforce the observance of Methodist law and discipline. Unfortunately, there were a few ministers who used this authority austere and without tact, thereby exacerbating an already tense situation that led to the troubled years.

In the opinion of some who entertained for him the highest admiration, many of his friends—and flatterers—erred in appointing him to so many offices. That was particularly so in the case of his Presidency of the Theological Institution, which was a contributory cause of the Warrenite agitation, leading to a lawsuit and, by degrees, to the Disruption of 1849. Be it noted that Bunting protested vigorously against the appointment, going so far as to assert that he would only accept it if the penalty for refusal were expulsion from the ministry; but he was persuaded to change his mind.

As early as 1832 the storm was brewing, and it increased in violence as Bunting increased in influence and popularity. One dislikes, intuitively, to associate jealousy with any body of Christian ministers, but that it existed in some quarters seems beyond doubt. He was attacked in the Conference, on the platform and in the Press, being generally accused of advocating ministerial prerogative and autocracy to the prejudice of the lay element in Methodism. Again and again the Conference rallied to his support and the vindication of his character, affirming, as early as 1833, 'their steady and undeviating confidence in his fidelity and integrity as a Minister and a Christian, and their perfect and cordial satisfaction with the whole of his conduct during the year'. Occasionally Bunting was moved to speak in Conference in his own defence and to challenge his opponents, as in 1848, when he declared: 'I think I have more popularity than I desire, but it is to me disagreeable to be represented as a pope-dictator. . . . My heart is full of affection towards you. I wish to stand well with you. . . . I do not mean to leave you—but to retire into quietness'—which he did.

All attempts to pacify the malcontents failed. Bunting's attitude seems to have been that this was not the right time for instituting such far-reaching constitutional changes as were advocated. So the storm swept on with growing and deplorable intensity, resulting in the Disruption of 1849.

We have no intention of stirring the embers of ancient controversies, which, in any case, have little if any relevance to life today. Suffice it to say that Bunting took no active part in the expulsion of the three most notorious malcontents. By the Conference of 1848 he had ceased to dominate the assembly. He was then sixty-nine years of age and, though subsequently he intervened occasionally in debate, he was content to leave his achievements and their development in the hands of younger men who had gained the hearing and confidence of their brethren. He lived to see happier days and the dying down of evil passions, the building up of the Methodism that he loved, the repairing of the breach.

It is in Joseph Fowler's Conference journals, or notes, as embodied in Benjamin Gregory's *Sidelights on the Conflicts of Methodism*, that we meet Jabez Bunting most intimately. In imagination we see and hear him in its pages as the great Master of Assemblies, dominating the Conference, expounding Methodism and his own schemes to add to her glory and influence, to the



delight of his admirers and the chagrin of his foes. We see him as a man of various moods. He was master of the curt type of retort that alienates still further a man's opponents, as when he replied to Robert Melson, an outstanding dissident and publicist, that what he was concerned about was 'not Methodism, but Melsonism'. He could occasionally be as petulant as a spoilt child, as at the Conference of 1844, over which he presided. In disagreement with certain appointments which were being made, he exclaimed, 'Let me go home; it will be a relief to my conscience. I will sign your minutes.' There were cries of 'No! No!' Fowler says he left the Chair, but was at length persuaded to resume it.

Many are the testimonies to his outstanding excellencies: not only his statesmanship, but his tenderness of heart, his love for the young, his power as a preacher, and his wonderful and moving gift of prayer. Thomas Jackson records how 'for many years he took his place among the most popular and effective preachers of the age', and how his prayers 'beautifully corresponded with his preaching ability'. He considered that 'no man better understood the genius of Wesleyan Methodism than Dr Bunting, and no man has done so much to adapt its institutions and agencies to the existing state of things after the death of its Founder'. 'Yet', he continued, 'it cannot be doubted that in the ardour of debate he did not invariably preserve that "meekness of wisdom" which characterized his general intercourse with his brethren.'

Dr J. H. Rigg, when as a candidate for the ministry he met Bunting in London, was impressed by his courtesy and kindness to a mere youth. Later he came to know him more intimately and recorded: 'nothing about this great man . . . was more remarkable than his modesty and candour; his moderation even when he felt bound to censure; his large tolerance and generous breadth of view, though, on some all-important questions his views were, on critical occasions, emphatically expressed'. William Arthur, in a beautiful tribute, writes of those who 'look back upon a long and changeful voyage across life's troubled sea and remember, as the moment of their soul's crisis, a time when his [Bunting's] voice seemed as if it had made all around them devouring waves; and then he turned their eye to One who said *Peace, be still*, and there was a great calm'.

So we see him, the most controversial figure in Methodist history, pitched between the extremes of adulation and vituperation; the man in whose temporary absence the Conference more than once suspended its business, awaiting his return. He has been described as *The Last Wesleyan*. In the plain sense of those words he was not; there were many who survived him, nor is their breed entirely extinct after 100 years. But, as we have seen, he loved Methodism passionately, and no man of whom that is true can be wholly black at heart. Stubborn as he was in defence of his opinions and his policy, one can understand his opponents' accusation of autocracy. Even his critics had to admit his statesmanlike qualities. In a turbulent age, when men's passions surge violently and reason and charity limp behind impulse and ambition, *festina lente* is a wise maxim. Such seasons are far from being the best in which to inaugurate changes of fundamental significance, and this Bunting seemed to realize. Much for which the malcontents of that day clamoured has now become part of our Methodist constitution, brought about in calmer days and in a Christian

atmosphere of brotherly understanding. One can hardly doubt but that, had his life been so immoderately prolonged, Jabez Bunting would have given his blessing to the Wesleyan Conference of 1878, composed, for the first time, of ministers and laymen, and to the Union of 1932.

When the Conference of 1857 met in Liverpool the familiar figure was no longer in his accustomed place. Most of those present could not remember a Conference without him, and there was a moving scene when his message was read. He asserted his belief in the rightness of his policy and sent his affectionate greetings to his brethren, assuring them that he would die 'in the true faith of Evangelical Arminianism . . . that is the true Gospel'.

His health steadily declined and on 16th June 1858 he passed over. The Home Secretary gave permission for the interment to take place in the burial-ground of Wesley's Chapel in the City Road. The old sanctuary had known no such a funeral since that of Wesley. The service lasted nearly four hours, and it is on record that John Bowers offered a prayer which continued for forty-five minutes—a *tour de force* even for those spacious days!

It is probably beyond the wit of man so to write of Jabez Bunting as to win the approval of all men, and he who is wise will not attempt it; neither will he resent criticism nor allow himself to be drawn into useless debate on matters that are no longer in question.

But for some of us it is possible to see Jabez Bunting as one who, probably quite unconsciously, helped to prepare the way for a Methodism united not only in constitution but in Christian fellowship and service, earnestly desiring—

*to serve the present age,  
Our calling to fulfil,*

and, in face of the world's needs, praying

*O, may it all my powers engage  
To do my Master's will!*

How Jabez Bunting's heart would have rejoiced!

A tablet to his memory is in Wesley's Chapel. One can imagine the 'shade' of the old warrior stealing in the dusk of evening into that sanctuary that he knew so well, standing before that immense memorial on which his virtues and achievements are set forth in thirty-nine lines of eulogy, and commenting, incredulously, 'And did men *really* see Jabez Bunting so? The Lord knoweth the heart. To Him be the glory.'

W. L. DOUGHTY

## Recent Literature

EDITED BY R. NEWTON FLEW

*Adventure in Search of a Creed*, by F. C. Happold. (Faber & Faber, 15s.)

Dr Happold has written a fascinating book. The reader will not have progressed far before suspecting that here is a bit of spiritual autobiography. Dr Happold is vividly aware of the contemporary intellectual climate. Observing that 'to sweep through history is a fascinating occupation', he proceeds to pilot us on such a survey and concludes 'it is possible for twentieth-century man to launch out in a new adventure of mind and spirit'. He reminds us that, thanks to the mathematicians, 'a new dimension of the material universe has been laid bare', in which the paradoxes of sense-phenomena may be resolved. Our whole conception of 'matter' has been revolutionized. He concludes that 'to find Truth is to penetrate through the veils of appearance to the unveiled secret of the Universe', and this must be sought 'in the totality of the experiences and insights of the human race'. He senses an analogy between the supra-phenomenal world of modern Science and the transcendent world of Religion. Man is conscious of two worlds, one without and one within. Science and pure Reason are concerned with the former; Religion with the latter. So we pass on to the great mystics of the world and their apprehensions of the great ultimate, God. Dr Happold's knowledge of the writings of both Christian and Oriental mystics is extensive and intimate. An outstanding contention of the book is that in every realm of human interest faith precedes knowledge. Faith assumes the truth of certain premisses, some of which seem incontrovertible, whilst others, both in the realm of Science and of Religion, are what Michael Polanyi calls *intelligent guessing*. Such faith is tested largely by experiment, and knowledge begins to emerge when the tests are safely passed. Then each access of new knowledge becomes a kind of springboard for new ventures of faith and man approaches nearer to Ultimate Truth. The author, himself a Christian, rebuts any suggestions that he regards Christianity and the great world religions as on equal footing and declares that 'it is sufficient for the Christian to have found Truth in the arms of Christ'. Though the reader may not agree with every conclusion, he will yet find much stimulus for healthy thought. The author is writing about and out of experiences which he and others have found to be real and vital to them, and he would have all men enter into his joy. His book is a welcome addition to the literature of the spiritual life. As such we gladly wish it success.

W. L. DOUGHTY

*The Christian and the World of Unbelief*, by L. L. Miller. (Abingdon Press, via Epworth Bookshop, \$4.75.)

*On Selfhood and Godhood*, by C. A. Campbell. (Allen & Unwin, 35s.)

This book by Mrs Miller and Professor Campbell's Gifford Lectures have the same background. They are both concerned with the present state of philosophy and the attitude of philosophers towards religious reality. Mrs Miller, however, after two admirable chapters on Faith and Knowledge and on Faith and Philosophy proceeds to illustrate her thesis in other disciplines—social science, ethics, culture and history, while Professor Campbell develops his subject in more detail, though not more profundity. Mrs Miller is a physicist who afterwards studied theology at Union Theological Seminary under Tillich and McNeill. She is now at Kenyon College, Ohio, where her husband is head of the Department of Physics. She has a sure grasp of her subject, and she sets it out with commendable clarity and precision. Her thesis is that 'only the particular exists for God . . . for only the particular can be created, loved,

and sustained. But for man the particular is a stumbling block. . . . He has to have a world, a totality, into which he can fit the particulars as parts' (p.88). Man deals with these particulars by creating generalizations and abstractions, and so he transcends his naturally limited senses. 'But he cannot or rather will not understand that this knowledge of his, when viewed from the side of God's knowledge of the creation, is precisely his weakness, his inability to know and love as God knows and loves. Observe how man glories in his ability to manipulate and to dominate the particular by means of the general.' Hence men become attached to humanity while disliking individual people, or postulate a 'proleteriat' while having no contact with individual workers, or discuss 'Russia' or 'America' with no regard for individual Russians or Americans. Without using the word 'nominalism', she demonstrates how nominalistic is a good deal of modern thought, even modern religious thought, and how this shows itself in social and political life. 'In every age it is the popular versions of the dominant philosophies that become the half-conscious dynamics of society' (p.79). In her chapter on Ethics she comes near to Professor Campbell's thesis when she deals with 'the idealistic concept of man as the basically symbol-creating creature, who by means of symbolic transformation makes a world out of every chaos' (p.152). Dr Campbell would hold that this is true in religion, for 'would not the strange thing be if finite, temporal man were capable of comprehending, as He truly is, the Infinite and Eternal Spirit that is God' (p.355). Mrs Miller is a Christian theologian as well as a philosopher and without perhaps intending it she has written an admirable 'apologetic' treatise. It is beautifully written, without a superfluous word (no mean achievement for a philosopher), and every page, especially in the sections on logical positivism and existentialism, 'gives one furiously to think'. It is to be hoped that it will be made available in this country and at a much lower price.

Professor C. A. Campbell's lectures represent a healthy reaction against what he calls the worship of 'the twin gods of so much recent British philosophy—empiricism and linguisticism', and an attempt at a more constructive statement of the problems of self-consciousness and of religion. His first series deals with the question of selfhood as a preliminary study necessary before we can get the subject of natural theology in its proper setting. Although we are still all psychologists nowadays, he believes that a revival of metaphysics is on the way, and it is certainly refreshing to have such questions as cognition, judgement, reason, revelation discussed on the strictly philosophical level. He sums up this first course as an attempt to show that 'human experience is found to imply a unitary and relatively enduring subject, a being not reducible to experiences, but manifesting itself *in* experiences'. From this point he proceeds to his second course on the nature of 'godhood'. Religion and theism, the problem of evil, the sense of the numinous and the objective validity of religion are all dealt with most effectively from the philosophical angle. Such an apologetic is welcome in days when philosophers are apt to get bogged down in an attempt to distinguish between essence and existence. Professor Campbell manages to get through with only one brief reference to Kierkegaard, and none at all to the Existentialist school. Nevertheless, it is questionable whether an adequate indication of religion can be made on philosophical lines alone. It is a good co-ordinating subject, which everywhere requires the fuller testimony of anthropology and psychology, while in the case of Christianity it also requires an appreciation of history. Professor Campbell recognizes this, and concludes that the conviction that God is a living presence in the hearts of men neither requires nor is capable of philosophical corroboration. 'The God of the philosopher is not the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' It is this keen recognition of the limitations, as well as the force, of philosophical argument, that makes this book so stimulating and so encouraging.

A. VICTOR MURRAY

*The Beginnings of Christian Art*, by D. Talbot Rice. (Hodder & Stoughton, 42s.)

The question of what constitutes Christian art is beset with difficulties. That which makes art Christian is not its style, for there have been many styles used by Christian artists, and Christian pictures may be picturesque, narrative, expressionist, or anything else. Nor is its subject-matter sufficient to make it Christian, for there are many Italian Renaissance pictures on religious subjects which are clearly secular. The Christianity in a picture is to be found in the attitudes it expresses, but what they are and exactly how they are expressed are things too subtle to be easily described. Professor Rice suggests them only in very broad terms and then quite incidentally. He holds that Christian art is spiritual as opposed to material (El Greco and not Rubens), that one important constituent of it is reverence (as seen in Our Lady of Vladimir), and that it must be above all transcendental (as in Byzantine works), though he would agree that the esoteric transcendental faith which became an essential feature of Byzantine Christianity, 'was based not so much on the teaching of Christ Himself as on the ideas that had penetrated from the East'. This is, however, not a book about aesthetics or art criticism or Christianity, but about art history. Professor Rice outlines the styles which contributed to the beginnings of Christian art, and the ways in which that art developed until the time when a new outlook began to replace the early medieval one; in the West this took place about the year 1100, and in the East not until after the fifteenth century. There are many excellent plates which he uses to illustrate his thesis and many descriptions of particular works; only occasionally, however, does he give really illuminating criticism. In general, when he describes a painting one does not see it or feel it or grasp its meaning, but one knows what is its date and why, what influences are to be seen in it, in what style it is painted, and what is good about its technique. The book is thus immensely learned, but hardly inspiring. As a source of sound, scholarly, historical information it is admirable; but its usefulness will be for those who want to trace influences rather than to understand what Christian artists say.

J. ALAN KAY

*Prince Charles's Puritan Chaplain*, by Irvonwy Morgan. (Allen & Unwin, 21s.)

It is always fascinating, if perhaps little more than an intellectual parlour game, to speculate on the 'ifs' of history. Suppose Charles I had been a Puritan! The very thought seems preposterous, for the Stuart idea of kingship was not compatible with Puritan theology. And yet there was a period in the 1620s when the Puritans had great influence with the Duke of Buckingham, the Royal Favourite. While William Laud was the holder of a Welsh bishopric, quivering with excitement at each ducal nod, the Puritan, John Preston, was in attendance at Theobalds when James I died, and accompanied Charles and Buckingham back to London in a closed coach, administering consolation on the way. John Preston is the central subject of Dr Irvonwy Morgan's expert study, for he was the Puritan leader, and important enough to have had at one stage the offer of the Great Seal. Dr Morgan has not given us a biography, for, moving and impressive as it could be, few publishers would encourage such a venture in these straightened days. Thus there can be no mention of the more mystical theology of the man in whose writings is found *The Soliloquy of the Devout Soul to Christ, Panting for the Love of the Lord Jesus*. But Dr Morgan skilfully unravels the events and intrigues which marked the brief period of Puritan emergence in Court politics, until, disillusioned by Charles's Arminian preferences, and Buckingham's defection at the York House Conference of 1627, they turned to Parliament as the principal forum of their influence and bid for power. Dr Morgan shows himself a master of historical research and deduction, with some salutary correctives to apply to the accepted judgements of other scholars. No small part of the book's value lies



in the questions it raises. What, for instance, was the relation of the Puritans to the Cambridge Platonists? Preston was a rational theologian who read Aquinas at the barber's, and he was Master of Emmanuel to which most of the leading Platonists later belonged. And what part should the Christian take in politics? Our modern prophets are always telling us that we must become 'involved', but so were the divines of the seventeenth century, and these pages are yet more evidence that there is no surer way to defile the robes of the saints! Yet Preston himself emerges as one who placed the Puritan cause above all personal advantage. GORDON S. WAKEFIELD

*Why I am a Protestant*, by Rupert E. Davies. (Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.); *The Wesleys and the English Language*, by G. H. Vallins. (Epworth Press, 8s. 6d.)

In his able survey Mr Davies rightly insists on the positive character of the Reformed Faith, which is Biblical Christianity, with a firm hold on the substance of the historic creeds, a high conception of the Church and Sacraments, and particularly a rich doctrine of the Holy Spirit. He holds what may be called the central Protestant position; and his lucid and penetrating exposure of the infallibility fallacies, whether of Roman Catholics or Fundamentalists, is of itself worth reading the book for. On the great Reformation issue he uses, rather oddly, the term 'Justification by Grace'. Does not the use of this phrase rather blur the issue? Would the Roman Church deny that we are justified by Grace? It is surely Justification *sola fide* that the Council of Trent specifically condemns. And is not the real crux of the matter a profound disagreement, a disagreement that goes to the heart of Christian theology, on the very meaning of the words 'grace' and 'faith'? When he comes to say why he is not a Roman Catholic, Mr Davies is both trenchant and charitable. He makes due acknowledgement of the impressive achievements of the Roman Church. But then, as he goes on to deal so fairly and effectively, one by one, with its various errors—the papal claims, the dogma of infallibility, transubstantiation, the authority of the Vulgate, the cult of Mary—he traces out all too clearly that lamentable process by which any closing of the breach seems to recede further and further into the distance. However, the book ends on a note of faith, and it is all to the good that these issues should be, as here, frankly faced, clearly and competently stated, and handled with just such a spirit of candour, scholarship and goodwill.

The late Mr Vallins's book brings together four self-contained essays: on John Wesley's short *English Grammar*, his short *Dictionary*, the syntax of the *Journal*, and Charles Wesley's hymns. The accounts of the *Grammar* and the *Dictionary* are not only deft and entertaining, but incidentally fill out for us the picture of John Wesley as, amongst all his other rôles, perhaps the first great popularizer, alert both to stimulate and suitably supply the intellectual wants of simple people. Mr Vallins deplores the comparative neglect by literary critics of the *Journal*, and this meticulous examination of its prose structure makes one wish that he had enlarged his canvas and given us that full literary appreciation which he was so well qualified to do. The hymns offer, of course, an inexhaustible mine for critical excavation, and though this short study does not claim to add substantially to the work of Bett, Manning, Flew, and G. H. Findlay, it constitutes an excellent introduction. GEORGE LONG

*The Bondage of the Will*, by Martin Luther; a new translation by J. L. Packer and O. R. Johnston. (James Clarke, 15s.)

Martin Luther regarded his reply to Erasmus of Rotterdam as one of his very best works. Not all his admirers agree with him on this point, for although the *De servo arbitrio* undoubtedly contains some of his profoundest insights, it was written in too great haste and heat to be really well done. Dr Packer and Mr Johnston, however, clearly share Luther's view of it, and since enthusiasm for the author is no bad thing

in a translator, they have made a very good job of turning it into English. Their rendering is much more readable, not only than those of Cole and Vaughan, now over a century old, but than Luther's original Latin itself. They have furnished it with a useful, if rather uncritical, Historical and Theological Introduction of some fifty pages, and have divided up the text into manageable sections with headings and sub-headings; they have also given references to the Weimar Edition for those who wish to turn up the original, and there is an index of Scripture references. The publishers are to be congratulated on both the excellent production and the remarkably low price of the book.

PHILIP S. WATSON

*In the Days of Great Peace*, by Mouni Sadhu. (Allen & Unwin, 18s.)

The author of this unusual record is a European, and his book for the most part comprises extracts from the diary which he kept while he stayed at Sri Ramana Maharshi's *ashram* at Tiruvannamalai, only a few months before the great Hindu saint and guru passed away in 1950. Mouni Sadhu affords the reader a close-up of this advanced soul, and gives—amongst other details—an account of Maharshi's technique of *jnana yoga*—that is, discrimination between the Real and the Unreal—whereby the disciple, having at length become aware of the non-existence of the ego, discovers Reality within. The author claims to have reached this liberating state, as well as the highest superconscious experience, *samadhi*; and the various mental stages through which he passed are described as simply as is possible with so abstruse a subject, and are a valuable part of this book. The reader is given some engaging impressions of *ashram* life, as well as scraps of autobiography of the author's life in Europe and elsewhere; but above and through all, the figure of Sri Ramana Maharshi emerges unobtrusive yet clear—gentle, and full of loving wisdom.

JOHN EARLE

*What Kind of Education?*, by Donald Hughes. (Epworth Press, 5s.)

In this very readable book Mr Hughes discusses some of the problems faced today by the educational world in general and by the grammar schools and public schools in particular. In his Preface the author modestly expresses the hope that his book, by its inadequacy, will provoke sequels from those who ought to be writing them. We may share his hope, but not this implied judgement on his own contribution, which, as one would expect, is not only stimulating, but eminently sane, wise, and humane. It takes the form of an imaginary conversation between a number of schoolmasters, dons, and others at the end of an educational conference at one of the older universities—a conversation which, as so often, and rightly happens, lingers on into the wee sma' 'oors. Mr Hughes acknowledges his debt to Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium* for his pattern, though he himself has successfully used it, on a smaller scale, in the last chapter of *Reason and Imagination*. Each contributor adds something of value to the discussion, but there is no space here to do more than record the reviewer's appreciation of Braid's treatment of that sacred slogan, 'Equality of opportunity'; Locke's defence of games; Taylor's moving plea for a cessation of the quarrel between science and the arts; the 'customer's angle' presented by Duncan, parent and industrialist; and finally the *confessio fidei* of Cotton, the school chaplain: 'I believe that if we have the courage to seek first the Kingdom of God, these things will be added unto us. That's not only good religion; it's good education.' On p.30, in the penultimate line, a 'not' seems to have been omitted before the word 'down.'

ANTHONY PEPPER

*Progress in Child Care*, by Audrey Wilson. (National Children's Home, 7s. 6d.)

This expands the 1957 Convocation Lecture of the National Children's Home. The best chapters are domestic. No. 2 gives the history of the N.C.H. from its foundation

in 1869. By 1875 a system of training had been established for men and women who wanted to become house-parents of branch homes. There were already nineteen students (p.38). Chapters 3 and 4 describe how this training has changed. In Chapter 5 Miss Wilson tells of being first Principal of Princess Alice College, Sutton Coldfield. In the rest of the book she ranges over the entire field of child care, using examples drawn from the N.C.H. for illustration. In Chapter 7 she criticizes the system operating since the Children Act of 1948. Her main point is that children in care are moved from one kind of home to another far too often: 'In the normal course of events . . . a child . . . may be admitted to a reception centre, from there transferred to an intermediate home, thence to a foster-home or a long-stay home. From either of these he may be moved again . . .' (p.123). The appendices include the Order of Service at the ordination of the Sisters of the N.C.H., and a list of reports quoted. There is an index.

ANNIS FLEW

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#### NOTABLE ARTICLES IN PERIODICALS

- The Congregational Quarterly*, October 1957.  
 National Recognition of Religion, by John Huxtable.  
 Some Aspects of Church Life in the Netherlands, by Hendrik J. de Kieird.  
*The International Review of Missions*, October 1957.  
 Non-Church Christianity in Japan, by W. H. H. Norman.  
 The Moravian Church in the World, by J. M. Van der Linde.  
*The International Review of Missions*, January 1958.  
 The Need for a Unified Church in Southern Rhodesia, by Fred Rea.  
 In Reviews of Books:—'L'Abbé Paul Couturier', by Henry R. T. Brandreth, C.G.S.  
*The Yale Review*, Autumn 1957.  
 Academic Freedom and German Politics, by Thomas T. Helde.  
 Liberty and Equality, by Reinhold Niebuhr.  
*Studies in Philology*, October 1957.  
 Rhetoric and the Law Student in Sixteenth-century England, by D. S. Bland.  
 'Labors of the Learned', Neoclassic Book Reviewing Aims and Techniques, by Edward A. Bloom.  
*The Harvard Theological Review*, July 1957.  
 The Baptism of John and the Qumran Community, by John A. T. Robinson.  
*Saturn*, October-November 1957.  
 The Catholic Church in Continental China, by Léon Trivière.  
*Interpretation*, October 1957.  
 A Theology for Modern Man. A Study of the Epistle to the Romans, by William Hamilton.  
 Modern Spiritualism, by Frank Bell Lewis.  
 In Book Reviews: Dynamics of Faith, by Paul Tillich—Albert C. Outler.
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# From My New Shelf

BY R. NEWTON FLEW

*The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, edited by F. L. Cross (O.U.P., 70s.). The place of honour in this issue must go to the Lady Margaret Professor of Divinity at Oxford. 'It is believed that the *Dictionary* will put the student of Church History in possession of a larger body of bibliographical material than any other work of similar compass.' This claim is modest. He might go on to say that never before, in this country at least, has such a body of facts been assembled in one volume about the Christian Church. For example, your bell rings, and you admit a distressed mother from your own church, whose son is greatly attracted by Jehovah's Witnesses. 'Can you tell me anything about them?' she says. You reach for your *Oxford Dictionary* and read the article. If you think that information not deterrent enough for him, read and use the article on Russell and his unsavoury character, and set him side by side with our Lord. Then look up the article 'Rutherford', the successor to Russell as head of the sect. By this time you can give all the facts to the young man and, if he has any sense, he will be attracted no longer. Something like this actually happened in a London suburb more than forty years ago. But it took the minister some days to discover what the possessor of this *Dictionary* can find out in fifteen minutes. There certainly wasn't any *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* in those days.

*Fifty Hymns by Charles Wesley*, selected by J. Alan Kay (Epworth Press, 7s. 6d.). This would serve as a gift book to anyone who has a piano, or to anyone who is anxious to know more about the people called Methodists. But chiefly it is intended as a companion in the prayer life. It has been chosen to mark the 250th anniversary of Charles Wesley. Nothing could be more suitable. It contains a Preface from the pen of the editor; four pages of biography from Dr Benson Perkins which to most people, even among the Methodists, will be a revelation; the famous Preface from the 1780 *Hymn Book*; the Table of Contents from the 1780 book, on which Frederick Luke Wiseman used to lecture, and which has served some of us as a guide in teaching systematic theology; and last, but by no means least, a page containing Wesley's Directions for Singing. There are seven of them, and perhaps you will want to be primed with them, and then you will buy this book. The selection is admirably made for the worshipper, especially in his private devotions.

*Some Problems of the Atomic Age*, by C. A. Coulson (Epworth Press, 3s. 6d.). Professor Coulson is the opposite of an alarmist. But he has used his opportunity as the second Scott Lidgett Memorial Lecturer to tell us some very grave truths. This lecture ought to be bought by all who have eyes to see and brains to comprehend. On p.26 Professor Coulson says with reference to the large H-bomb exploded at Bikini in 1956: 'the responsible committee appointed by the Atomic Scientist's Association reports that between 10,000 and 15,000 people may develop cancer of the bone' (p.26). 'Two of the people whom we might expect to be best informed on this are Professors H. J. Müller in America, and J. B. S. Haldane in Britain. Entirely independently, they have come to substantially the same conclusions, that before the effect of radiation already introduced into the atmosphere has worked itself out, something like 30,000 human lives will have been completely or partially spoiled.' Those who can find time are referred to a recent U.N.E.S.C.O. pamphlet called *Man's Responsibility to His Genetical Heritage*. Professor Coulson finds evidence in the daily Press, and also in the religious Press, to confirm his suspicion that some persons who ought to know better are dealing out consoling but misleading information to ordinary people.

*The Quest and Character of a United Church*, by W. E. Garrison (Abingdon Press, via Epworth Bookshop, \$3.50). The author of this most valuable book is well known in the U.S.A. and far beyond. He has taken a leading part in the discussions on 'The Nature of the Church'. He gives his testimony that our 'Faith and Order' conversations have given us a warm sense of Christian fellowship reaching across even the widest theological chasms. He belongs to the 'Disciples of Christ', and was born into a home where ecumenicity was already taught and practised. He puts the question now: Are we sure what we mean by a United Church? We are at a stage in our conversations where we know the differences between the denominations. Either these differences which now constitute barriers must be turned into agreements or the differences must be so conceived that they shall no longer constitute barriers to unity among those who hold them. The first has not a chance of success; the second would produce a Church united but diversified. The first means compulsion. The result has been centuries of persecution. Dr Garrison traces out the sad story; how the great Augustine wrote a letter to Vincent of Lerins justifying the use of violence in dealing with heretics; how that method was approved and adopted from the end of the fourth century until near the end of the seventeenth. This is not an issue between Protestants and Catholics. But the suggestions as to the implications of a unity which is compatible with freedom are set out at the end of the book (pp.223-7). Let us enumerate them—they are: (1) The members must love one another. (2) There must be an interchangeable membership. (3) There must be an interchangeable ministry. (4) Varieties of organization and structure must exist independently but harmoniously within the United Church. (5) The only credal test should be the simplest and earliest: 'Jesus is Lord.' 'The test cannot be less if the united Church is to be the Christian Church.' (6) There must be similar liberty, and there will be similar variety, in the use and interpretation of the sacraments. (7) Equal freedom will be enjoyed by congregations for the use of various forms of worship, liturgical or non-liturgical. (8) There must on more than a local scale be 'agencies of co-operation' for the missionary, educational, and benevolent or social work of the Church. These agencies should link them in an even wider fellowship of service than the local groups of churches can provide. These 'agencies' are actually coming into being, for young people at least, as diligent perusal of *The Ecumenical Press Service* (17 Route de Malagnou, Geneva) will reveal.

*Baptism and Church in the New Testament*, by Johannes Schneider (Carey Kingsgate Press, 3s. 6d.). Any work which Dr Ernest Payne thinks worthy of translating from German into English should be studied with especial care. Professor Schneider's chair is in the University of Berlin and he is well known in Germany and in the U.S.A. Making use of Qumran material recently discovered, he shows that John the Baptist was the first to initiate a real baptism movement directed to the whole people: 'Among the Essenes and in the same way among the community of Khirbet Qumran, baptism forms a constituent part of the way of life within a fellowship which is fenced off from the rest of the people, and regards itself as the true congregation of God. John the Baptist on the other hand, directed his message to the whole people. His task was to prepare a people for the Lord.' But the interested reader must read the rest of the argument, based on the New Testament, for himself. The evidence is not conclusive on either side of the great debate on infant baptism.

*The Ladder of Perfection*, by Walter Hilton; a new translation by Leo Sherley-Price (Penguin Classics, 3s. 6d.). The Introduction was written off the island of Portland, on H.M.S. *Osprey*, by the translator, who is a senior chaplain in the Royal Navy. It is fitting that one of the most entirely English of the medieval mystics should be presented to the English in the twentieth century by one engaged in work which we call 'practical'. Walter Hilton condemns the spirituality which neglects the tasks



of caring for children, servants, or the poor, in order to 'relax' or luxuriate in contemplation that is 'tending God's head, and neglecting His feet', in St Augustine's phrase. Walter Hilton is familiar with the works of St Augustine, Gregory and St Bernard. But his writing is that of a pastor anxious for his flock. He knows that caring matters most. Evelyn Underhill calls our attention to two complementary metaphors under which he describes the spiritual life; (1) as a complete remaking of human personality, or 're-forming' of the lost divine image in the soul, and as (2) a journey, a pilgrimage to Jerusalem. Mr Sherley-Price is to be congratulated on his translation and his Introduction.

*Athletes of the Spirit: Studies in Nine Christian Classics*, by Philip W. Lilley (Epworth Press, 10s. 6d.). The title is striking, inasmuch the early martyrs were called athletes for their endurance and witness for Christ under suffering. The nine studies are: (1) St Augustine's *Confessions*; (2) Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation*; (3) Samuel Rutherford's *Letters*; (4) Sir Thomas Browne's *Religio Medici*; (5) Blaise Pascal's *Thoughts*; (6) John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*; (7) William Law's *A Serious Call*; (8) John Wesley's *Journal*, and (9) John Woolman's *Journal*. These nine studies are based on a series of addresses delivered to a class under the auspices of the School of Study and Training of the Church of Scotland. They prove that, if that communion has not produced bishops, it can admire saints; and six of the studies then prove that Protestantism can produce them. The real miracle, at which I hope I shall never cease to wonder, is that all these studies of men and convictions are so amazingly relevant to our life today.

*The Mystical Theology of the Eastern Church*, by Vladimir Lossky (James Clarke, 16s.). The student who takes this book up casually and reads the first two chapters will, I fear, be tempted to desist. But then he will have missed an opportunity of learning about the Christian experience of millions of his fellow Christians. He is put off, perhaps, by the words 'cataphatic' and 'apophatic', which he will not find in any dictionary. Well, let him read the last three chapters, 'The Way of Union', 'The Divine Light', and 'The Feast of the Kingdom', and then read Hymn 648, verse 3 (*MHB*). Then he will be a pilgrim on his way to discover the treasures of the Eastern Church. Perhaps he might be induced to look up all the references in the Index to St Macarius of Egypt. Then he will understand why there is this entry in the private journal of John Wesley: 'I read Macarius and sang.' Professor Lossky is to be congratulated on his exposition of mystical theology, and of the new reality coming into the world—'the Church, founded on a two-fold divine economy the work of Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit'. He who would discuss theological matters with members of the Holy Orthodox Church must learn to expect a rebuke by their constant stress on the Holy Spirit. So it is in this book.

*Men of Wisdom* (Longmans, 6s. each). This new series begins with four attractive titles, all of which justify the claim made by each of them that it is 'lavishly illustrated'. The first is *Saint Augustine and His Influence through the Ages*. The editor is Henri Marrou, for twelve years Professor of the History of Christianity at the Sorbonne. A Bibliography has been provided by Professor J. J. O'Meara, and new translations by Edmund Hill. Altogether this is an admirable introduction to the study of St Augustine, and it is a joy to read. The second is *Master Eckhart and the Rhineland Mystics*, by Jeanne Ancelet-Hustache, a French lady who is a competent church historian and penologist. The translator is Hilda Graef. Eckhart is a puzzling figure, whom Baron von Hügel judged (*Mystical Element of Religion*, II.317) to have fallen into the error of regarding sin as a mere negation. In his *Latin Works* he insists that 'Evil is nothing but privation, or falling away from Being; not an effect but a defect'. Denifle, who edited and published the Latin writings in 1836, said that Eckhart would have been unable to answer for himself the question: 'What is the being

("Esse") of any creature as distinct from the "Essentia"? Eckhart says deliberately: 'God and Godhead are as distinct as earth from heaven.' One begins to have some sympathy with his pupils and his friends, who found his teaching very difficult. But these learned ladies are safe and sensible guides, and do not fall into the crevasse of Pantheism. There are also careful sketches of the work of Tauler, Suso, Ruysbroeck, and Cardinal Nicholas of Cues. The third volume in this series is *Saint Paul and the Mystery of Christ*, by Claude Tresmontant. It is refreshing to read the 'dialectic of weakness' (p.166), and the stress on holiness (pp.118-19). The text used for the selections from the New Testament is Mgr Ronald Knox's translation. Among the books recommended for further study are those of Deissmann, W. P. Davies, H. V. Morton, W. M. Ramsay, Bishop Wand, and Lietzmann. There is an unfortunate misprint in the last name. All these are Protestant authors. The critical attitude is conservative. The fourth book in this series is *Buddha and Buddhism*. This must have been the hardest task of all: to describe pre-Buddhist India, the legendary life of the Buddha, the old school of Wisdom, the new school of Wisdom, non-Indian Buddhism, the further spread of Buddhism, and, finally, Buddhist art—all this in 182 pages! The English reader will find this an excellent introduction to the religion which has recently celebrated its 2,500 years of life.

*Novum Testamentum Graece*, by Erwin Nestle and Kurt Aland (Stuttgart, Privilegierte Württembergische Bibel-anstalt). The latest, the twenty-second, edition of Nestle's *Greek Testament* has been sent to me as a gift. This public notice, they are likely to say, is my most cogent way of saying 'Thank you'. I do treasure these Nestle texts, but the time has not yet come when the British and Foreign Bible Society will be supplying students with this edition. There is an English Introduction of twenty-five pages. There are also German, Latin and Swedish versions of the Introduction. This edition is a pleasure to handle and to behold. The latest discovered papyri have been used, and the footnotes are more crowded than ever with various readings. We congratulate Professor Edwin Nestle on this patient following up and crowning of his father's work.

*Theological Essays*, by Frederick Denison Maurice, with Introduction by Edward F. Carpenter (James Clarke, 15s.). In the last two decades, war permitting, there has been a revival of interest in F. D. Maurice. It is a tribute by his fellow-Anglicans to one of the greatest sons of the Church of England, as is proved by the monographs by Claude Jenkins (1938), M. B. Reckitt (1947), F. Higham (1947), A. R. Vidler (1948), and the present Archbishop of York (1951). In the Introduction to the book which is now re-published, Canon Carpenter lays the stress—I think rightly—on the prophetic vision of Maurice, and summarizes the distinctive quality of these essays. First, 'the subject-matter that Maurice consistently handles in his theological writings has gone through the mill of his own experience. He is only too conscious of the problems inherent in faith. Secondly, Maurice uniformly endeavours to keep to, indeed to build upon, common human experience, and particularly of the grim fact of sin. . . . Thirdly, he recognized the unique character of the Christian faith as an historic religion. . . . Fourthly, it was this reverential awareness of a God working through history that encouraged Maurice to welcome, rather than retreat from, the new science, as unhappily did Wilberforce and too many of his theological contemporaries.' Our lately departed leader, John Scott Lidgett, in his 'Maurice Lectures' (1934), *The Victorian Transformation of Theology*, outstrips the Anglican theologians, both in his title and his tribute, 'I regard F. D. Maurice as having been by far the most important and significant personality—the most potent and pervasive influence—in the religious life and thought of England during the last century. A very great man, he owes his pre-eminent importance and influence to his marvellous—I am inclined to say unique—combination of prophetic witness, systematic thought, and creative endeavour,

unified and inspired by the ceaseless aspiration and pursuit of a wholly consecrated and truly saintly life.' W. E. Gladstone called him 'a spiritual splendour'. He was martyr as well as leader. No one surely can read the account which his son gives in the second volume of the *Life* (pp.163-209) without compassion for one who was so far ahead of his contemporaries. Even his admirers, like John Stuart Mill and Matthew Arnold, underestimated him. Students of theology who are 'in real earnest' should read and reread this book and the monographs mentioned above.

*A Book of Contemplation*, by Dagobert D. Runes (Philosophical Library Press, New York, via Epworth Bookshop, \$3.00). The author of this book of original epigrams has already won fame in the U.S.A. and beyond by the recent publication of *Letters to My Son*. It is not every author who can win the highest praise from Albert Schweitzer, Albert Einstein, and Leo Baeck. As one who often met that heroic person, Rabbi Leo Baeck, I should value his testimony, even above the rest, to the power of those letters, which must have been one of the last books he read before his death. Now that Dr Runes has followed up his *Letters* with epigrams, he is entering a more difficult and even more dangerous field, as if one should pick one's way through a plateau strewn with the remains of the artillery of the last war. A reviewer is doomed to pass a swift verdict. 'On the whole' is the badge of his clan. But this time if I say, 'On the whole, Dr Runes has succeeded', that is high praise. I mean that he has surprisingly few cynical sayings among his epigrams. Indeed, cynicism is almost entirely absent. Take the following as examples (the words in italics indicate the heading under which the epigram is placed): *Abolitionism*: 'The white man took willingly the black man as burden, but hesitates to take him as friend.' *Admiration*: 'Who fails to admire will never love.' *Age*: (1) 'Man's true age lies in the life span ahead of him, not the span behind him.' (2) 'Age is wasted on the tired; it is the most precious time of life.' (3) 'Wisdom grows with the years, but not in a barren soul.' (4) 'Grey hair is a sign of age, not wisdom'—and if I interject a hearty 'Amen' at this particular point, that is a sign of personal penitence rather than of observation. Later on in the book come these: '*Serenity* is as often the result of indifference as it is the sequel to philosophy.' *Sermon*: 'The flocks should leave impressed by the Lord, not by the Rabbi.' '*Servility* is a form of inverted arrogance; those who bow to the man above will always step on the man below.' '*Sex* was always here, but never so much talked about.' Sometimes we get a clearer glimpse of Dr Runes himself amid his epigrams. The word *History* can excite him, standing as it does, appropriately enough, amid the words, *Hermit*, *Heroes*, *Heroism*. On the other side are: '*Home* is where your friends are. *Homiletics*: 'I wish they would remember that Moses was a poor speaker; still his was the voice of God.' '*Humbleness* before a principle is the measure of a man's faith and character.' But the reader should study what is said under the word *History*, and then turn back to the poignant pages under the word *Christ*. We have not yet repented of our Anti-Semitism, and yet we have to meet our Judge. It is Christians who need a Wall of Wailing now.

*Lamb to the Slaughter*, by George Every (James Clarke, 7s. 6d.). How many school-boys have nourished, in their silent years, ambitions which have been fulfilled? Brother George Every is one of them, at all events, and the ambition was not unworthy. It began when he browsed in *The Golden Bough*; it was nourished by Jane Harrison's *Ancient Art and Ritual*, and after many years has issued in these lectures to theological students at the Bishop's Hostel, Lincoln. He finds the sacrificial idea even prior to the 'agricultural religion' with which Sir James Frazer and Miss Harrison were concerned, and points out that the Christian revelation is given to us in the language of sacrifice. If we want to 'demythologize' the Passion and Death of our Lord, we must give up not only the Resurrection, but the Lord's Supper. 'Objections to belief in the Resurrection on grounds of historical evidence must fairly and squarely be

faced.' But the possibility of any decision will depend upon our opinion of the sense and significance of sacrifice in human life. Brother Every puts three questions: Is it a psychological disease? A discarded stage in the development of agricultural science? Or is it something deeply rooted in the nature of things? But he must give you his answer, and, as you will discover, it will be extraordinarily interesting.

*The Faith of the Bible*, by J. E. Fison (Penguin Books, 3s. 6d.). It was certainly an original idea to use the four marks of the Church (one, holy, catholic, and apostolic) as divisions for a book on the faith of the Bible. The faith that there is only one God has been called the costliest possession in the spiritual life of mankind. Canon Fison begins his exposition with Amos and retraces his path to the *coup d'état* of John and the work of Elijah and Elisha; then to Samuel and Nathan; and so back to Moses and Sinai; and finally to Abraham and Ur of the Chaldees. The second mark of the people of the faith is holiness, and the second chapter is therefore called 'The Holiness of Judaism'. The argument would have been clearer if at the beginning of this chapter the readers (whom every reader of this book hopes will be many) could have been furnished with a study of the word 'holiness'. But Canon Fison could justly reply: 'Holiness' is perfectly defined by the first sentence of Chapter III: 'Jesus showed men God; that is what Christians believe'. Then I could support him by pointing readers to p.139, and there, I hope, they will be helped to know what catholicity is, because they will be looking at our Lord.

*La joie de Dieu, Commentaire de l'Evangile de Luc*, by Helmut Gollwitzer; translated into French by E. de Robert and Jean Carrère (Neuchâtel, Delachaux et Niestlé). The author, writing in German, acknowledges his debt to the commentaries of Calvin, J. Chr. von Hofmann (1878), and K. H. Rengstorf (1949); also Lohmeyer's great work on Mark (1937) and 'the beautiful meditation on the Gospels, *Le Seigneur*, by Romano Guardini.' This commentary will repay study. It is written to help preachers and pastors. There is fresh emphasis on the doctrine of grace; more than two pages are devoted to Luke 18<sup>15-17</sup>, when Jesus blesses the children and speaks of 'receiving' the Kingdom of God as a little child. This comes to a climax in the exposition of Luke's final chapters, and is best illustrated by the many pages (pp.276-306) devoted to the account of the crucifixion (Luke 23<sup>13-56</sup>).

*Heroes of the Faith*: (1) *David*; (2) *Paul*, by Stanley Sowton (Oliphants, 5s. each). The publishers are robbing Mr Sowton's books in most attractive raiment, and the contents will be as attractive to 'teenagers (for whom this series of books is intended) as the clothing. Indeed, they are exciting, these gaily-wrapped, inexpensive books. Basil Matthews it was, I think, who said that he wouldn't be content with the literature for boys and girls until he produced what we called 'Christian penny dreadfuls'. I think Stanley Sowton is the person who could have done it and who will be doing it. (But they can't be sold at 1d.!) Just open this book. The first words are: "'Jesse! My Lord Jesse!" 'Tis David's mother calling her husband to hear the story of the killing of a lion and a bear and to see their skins. Mr Sowton does not forget David's elder brothers and how they might be critical, and so he makes David tell his story shyly and hesitatingly, as if he were rather unwilling to describe it all. Mr Sowton doesn't forget the lion's sudden spring into the midst of Jesse's flock, nor the bear, hiding in the rocks, waiting to fall on the young shepherd, and the sheep who were following him. "Were you not afraid?" asked David's mother? "The Lord was with me," said David simply. After that there seemed no more to be said, but very much more to be thought about.' I have curtailed the first three pages of the book, but it is all like that—a triumph of Bible story-telling; and especially suitable to those unaccountable persons who at British Lessons Councils are called 'teenagers. But I dare to predict an epidemic of reading at a younger age than thirteen. (2) *Paul, an Imperishable Story*. The story opens: 'It was good fun being a boy in Tarsus round

about A.D. 4, in the heyday of the Roman Empire', and then the author forthwith describes the sailors, the camel-drivers, armed to the teeth, the Roman soldiers. Paul had two names: he was 'Saul' in the home, and 'Paul' to the Greek traders and Roman officials. Tarsus is interesting and Paul was proud of his Roman citizenship there. In order to explain a sudden conversion, Mr Sowton swiftly tells the story of Saul's education in Tarsus at a Jewish school; then his education with Gamaliel in Jerusalem, and his share in the martyrdom of Stephen. 'Jesus is never far away from anyone suffering for His sake.' This makes an intelligible picture of the storm in the mind of Paul; the advice of Gamaliel, his old teacher, which he had disregarded; the stories about Jesus which were circulating through Galilee as Paul passed through to Damascus; the rapt face of Stephen before he died—all are woven deftly together with the hearing of that Voice calling by his home name: 'Saul! Saul! Why do you persecute Me?' You must read Stanley Sowton now for yourself. But I can't help giving the beginning of the next chapter entitled 'He—the Persecutor was Persecuted'. 'It was a discerning man who once said that the staff work of Heaven is always perfectly timed.' Let me add to the merits of these two books *Heroes of the Faith*. Each of them contains a chapter with some most striking texts. The words attributed to David come in a chapter headed 'He wrote Words that will Never Die'. The texts from Paul's writings are gathered in a chapter headed 'He wrote Many Letters'. Mr Sowton calls them 'the flashing sentences which can be ours if we store them in our memories and carry them in our lives'.

*A Book of Worship for Schools*, compiled by H. F. Mathews (Epworth Press, 12s. 6d.). Mr Mathews is to be congratulated upon this book. It is intended to help head teachers, especially in secondary schools, and opens out a wide field of choice. It was a personal delight to open at p.144, and read that extract from Tennyson's 'Ulysses'; and then the passage in prose from Jeremy Taylor on pp.107-8. The books of prayers of the past and the present have been well searched. I hope that when the compiler comes to a second edition he will insert a third section—Of Prayers to the Holy Spirit. It would do English piety great good if a generation of youngsters arose knowing the answer to the inevitable question of Greek or Russian theologians about our prayers: 'Why don't you have more prayers to—or about—the Holy Spirit? He is with you all the time.'

*Why I am not a Christian*, by Bertrand Russell (Allen & Unwin, 16s.). This is a reprint of writings spread over many years (1899-1954). It is on this account necessarily scrappy, but that will not hinder the author's admirers from worshipping at the Rationalist shrine. The address which gives the title to the book has not been revised, nor its many mistakes and exaggerations expunged. The first remedy for the reader is to procure the book by Professor H. G. Wood, *Why Mr Bertrand Russell is not a Christian* (S.C.M., 1928). The passage from Mr Russell's statement on 6th March 1927 is as follows: 'That is the idea—that we should all be wicked if we did not hold to the Christian religion. It seems to me that the people who have held to it have been for the most part extremely wicked. You find this curious fact, that the more intense has been the religion of any period, and the more profound has been the dogmatic belief, the greater has been the cruelty, and the worse has been the state of affairs. In the so-called ages of faith when men did really believe the Christian faith in all its completeness, there was the Inquisition with its tortures; there were millions of unfortunate women burnt as witches.' Millions? Is this just a habit of exaggeration left over from boyhood days? 'The number of persons burnt under the first Inquisitor, Thomas Torquemada, has been variously estimated. Perhaps 2,000 is a fair estimate.' This is the view of the writers of the articles in the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* reviewed above, on *Inquisition* and *Torquemada*.

Two thousand is a blot big enough on the Inquisition set up in 1479, but between



'millions' and 2,000 there is a great gulf fixed. Our first attack from Mr Bertrand Russell came in the form: 'The Christian religion does not make men good.' But he swiftly changes his ground. There are too many instances of men being made better by Christ, from Saul of Tarsus and Augustine to Japanese Christians like Kagawa. The best ground, he feels, on which he can fight is the argument: 'The Christian religion, *as organized in its Churches*, has been and still is the principal enemy of moral progress in the world.' Professor Wood answers in effect: You are shifting your ground, you know. Come back again. 'Every single bit of progress in humane feeling, every improvement in the criminal law, every step towards the diminution of war, every step towards better treatment of the coloured races or every mitigation of slavery, every moral progress there has been since the beginning of the Christian Era has been advanced in the main, though not exclusively, by the consistent support, and heroic self-sacrificing leadership of Christian men and women.' All these considerations were advanced by Dr Wood in the little book of 1928. It is not the Churches or Christians who have stood still. There has been no inquiry as to what the Churches are teaching now. There ought to have been a purging of errors from this book. There ought to have been a frank acknowledgement of the mistake about the Ancient Catholic Church after the pp.48-9 of Dr H. G. Wood had been read. In this book of collected papers is one called, 'What I believe', where Mr Russell states his view of 'The Good Life' as a life inspired by love and guided by knowledge. Has he lived up to it in this book? Dr H. G. Wood says: 'It is usually supposed to be the duty of a scientist to face all the facts, and the virtue of a philosopher to see all sides of a question. Where Christianity is concerned, Mr Bertrand Russell considers himself exempt from such tiresome obligations.' He deserts his own ideal. He prefers hate guided by ignorance. It is strange how animus against Christianity will make hay of a man's scientific and moral standards.

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The Editor is always pleased to consider articles, or suggestions for articles, for the LONDON QUARTERLY & HOLBORN REVIEW. Typescripts should not normally exceed 2,500 words in length, and a stamped addressed envelope should also be enclosed.

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